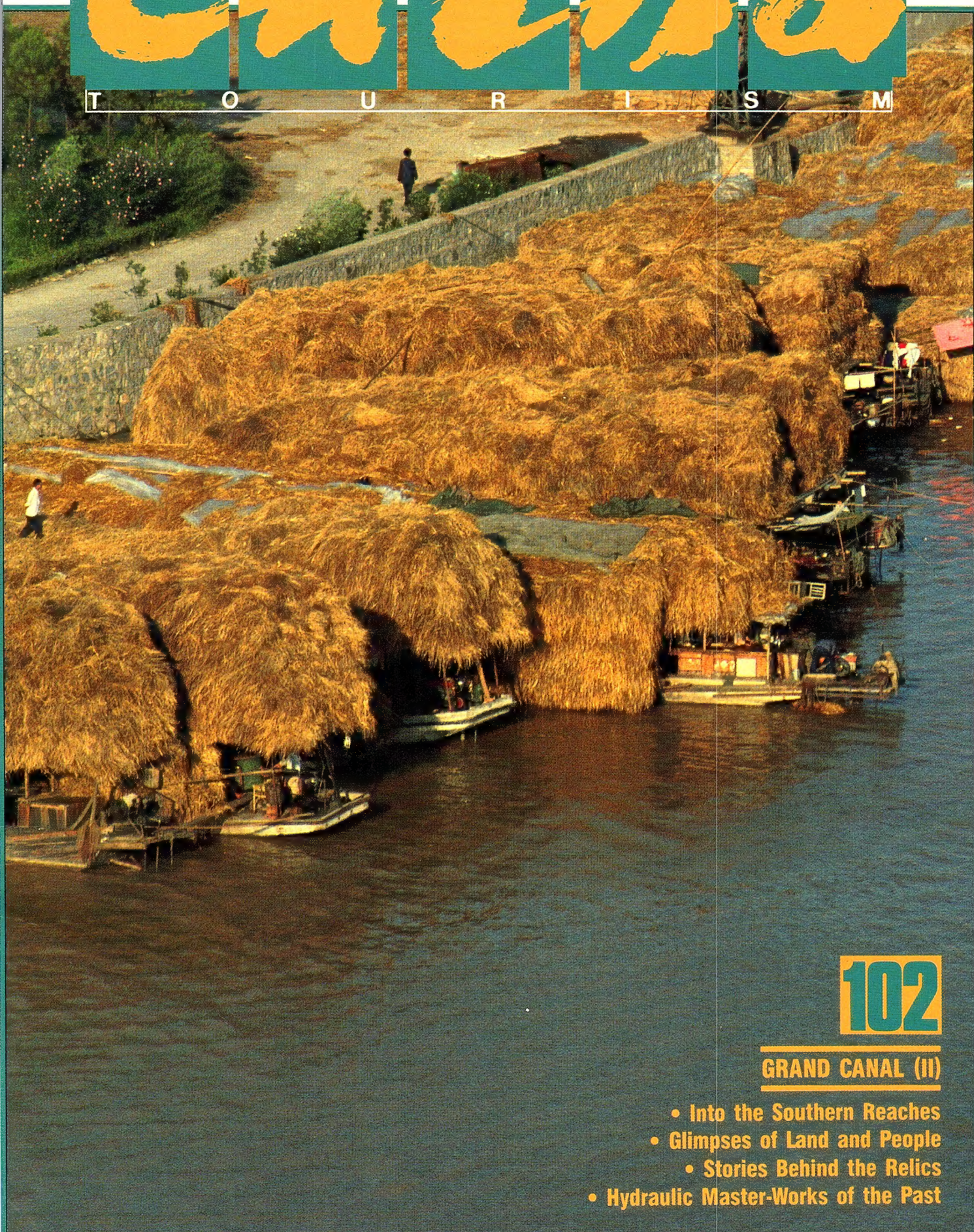


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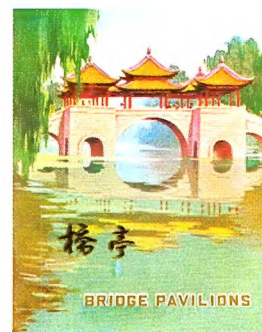
GRAND CANAL (II)

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- Glimpses of Land and People
- Stories Behind the Relics
- Hydraulic Master-Works of the Past



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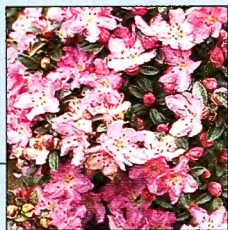
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EDITORIAL



Lush Land, Prosperous Cities....

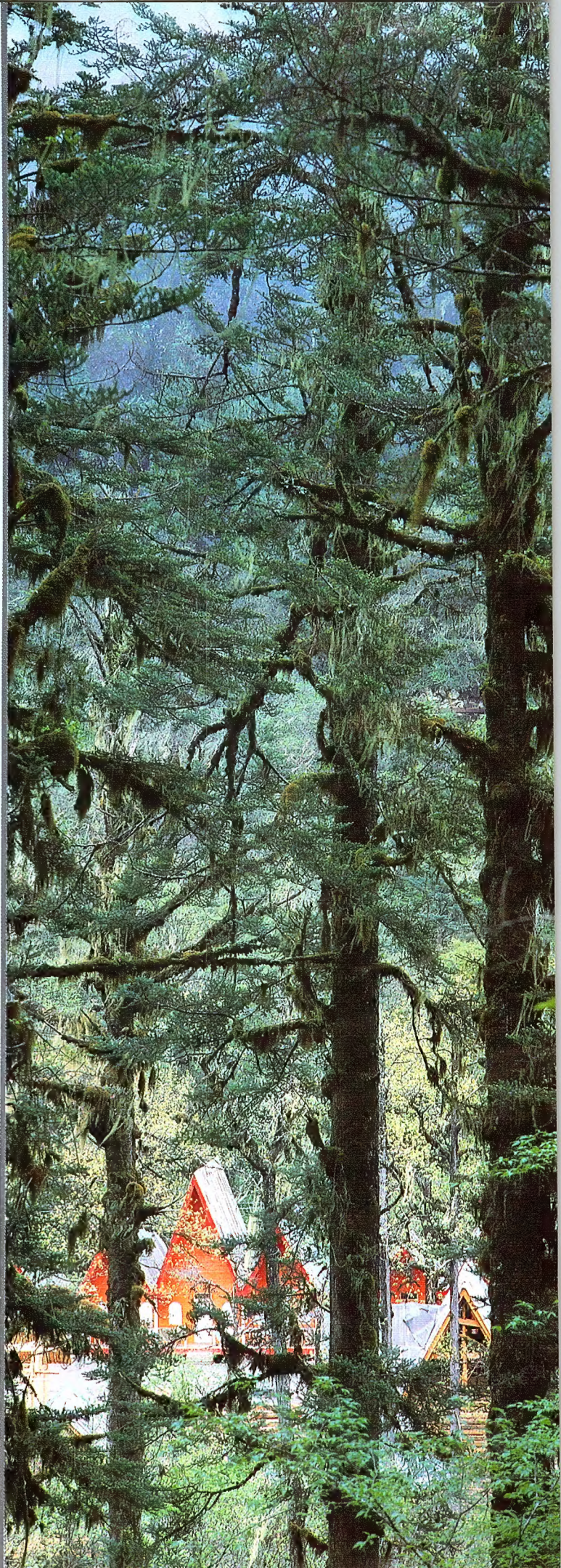
By way of contrast with the rather barren countryside through which the Grand Canal flows in its northern reaches, we turn our attention in this second of two issues on the theme to the southeast — to Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang.

Still flat but now lush, thanks to the mild, subtropical climate and plentiful rainfall, the land here has been subjected to intensive cultivation for well over a thousand years. Rice and wheat grow in abundance (one of the main reasons for the very existence of the canal system linking north and south), and there is extensive fish-farming. This is China's largest silk-producing area, Zhejiang alone accounting for one-third of production. Here too are cities boasting centuries of culture and sophistication, some of them sites of ancient kingdoms. Southern Jiangsu, in particular, is the location of some of China's most visually satisfying townscapes — a medley of charming whitewashed houses, little jetties and bridges over waterways. Not surprisingly these areas of the Grand Canal are also the most visited, and a Grand Canal trip from Wuxi or Suzhou to Hangzhou has become a favoured tourist option.

The southern canal sections have been lucky; their natural advantages have kept them more or less silt-free and they have remained an important part of China's transport infrastructure to this day. But no exploration of the Grand Canal would be complete without a look at the technical side ... at the attempts made by ingenious engineers over the canal's history to solve the problems caused by differing water levels and intractable rivers.

Another major article introduces the fascinating Hailuoguo Glacier Park in western Sichuan, three hundred kilometres — two days' bus ride — from the provincial capital, Chengdu. The micro-climate of this area in the lee of Mount Gongga (Sichuan's highest mountain at 7,556 metres) means that one makes the transition from subtropical to arctic within a matter of a few kilometres in a valley dotted with hot springs, while the glacier forges its path through virgin forest at less than 3,000 metres above sea-level. This will appeal especially to travellers with a passion for unsullied mountain regions of exceptional beauty.

Other topics in this wide-ranging issue include a colourful Inner Mongolian temple festival, an outstanding piece of architecture in a Fujian village commemorating a Tang-dynasty imperial concubine, chrysanthemums from Guangdong ... and much more.



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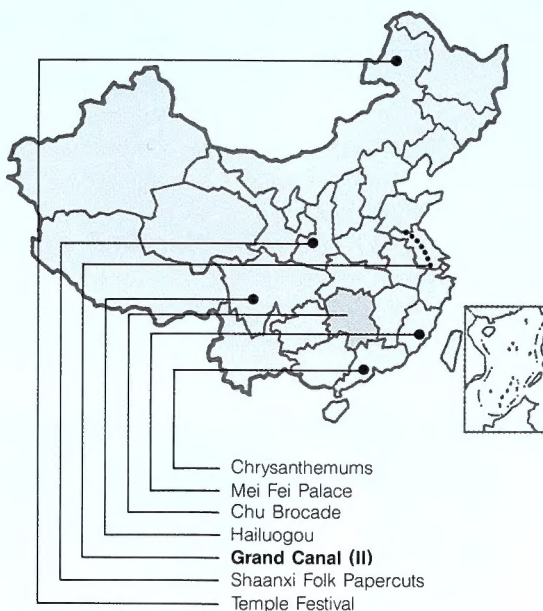
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Vice Director: Chai Ying

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Guorong

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Director of Editorial Dept.: Kuang

Wen Dong

Deputy Director: Megina Kwan

Editor: Jenny Marsh

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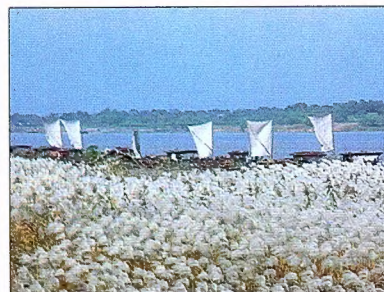
Into the Southern Reaches

TEXT BY YU LAN

We started out last month with a photographic celebration of the magnificent Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal from the air. In this issue we come back down to ground level to track down the innumerable picturesque sights to be seen along the canal in Jiangsu Province. From the wealth of material available we have selected just a few photographs which we hope you will enjoy.

In the north of China, the water in the Grand Canal seems not entirely at ease in its bed — now a sluggish trickle, now a raging torrent. The open country which stretches away from both banks is so vast, so empty, that one feels the weight of the sky like a blow ... and the full insignificance of human endeavour.

But down in the gentler south man and waters seem to have formed a symbiosis of sorts. As the sun rises, the canal-dwellers begin to stir: women take their washing down to

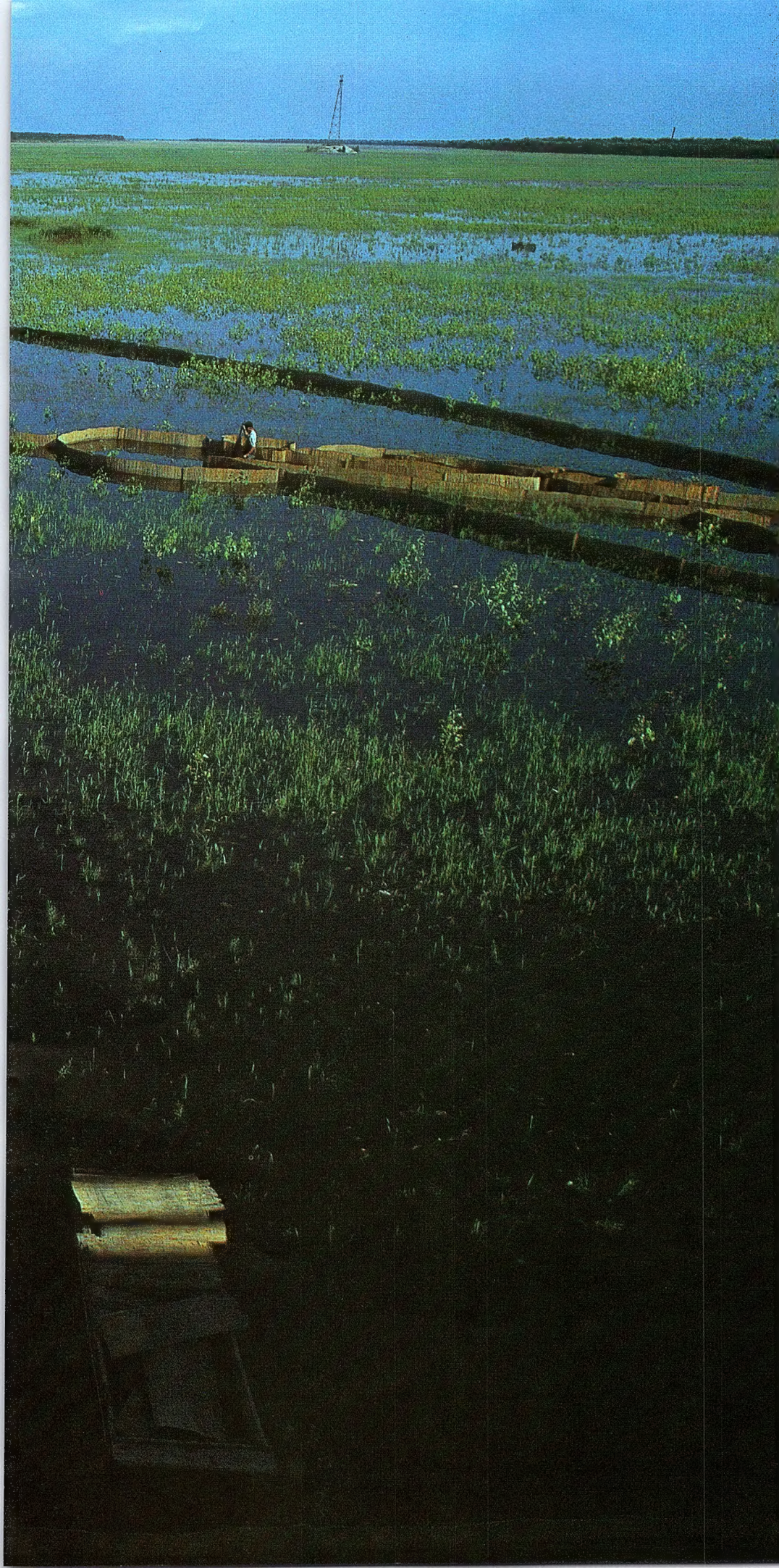


the canalside; duckherds embark on the rippled surface with their quacking charges. Soon sails turn the canal into a busy thoroughfare and windmills rise over fields carpeted with juicy grass and gaily-coloured wild flowers.

Even if some of the following photos are not strictly of the Grand Canal, they are nevertheless of places in the immediate vicinity which are themselves affected by its pulse, washed by its waters....

(Photos by E Yi, Mao Mingqing, Gao Mingyi, Bao Kun, Zhang Haibo, Yu Zhixin & Deng Lili)





In the Qing dynasty, soldiers were stationed along the banks of the Grand Canal day and night to watch for signs of flooding while safeguarding the imperial wealth — the all-important barges transporting tribute grain to the court at Beijing. Today, the waters are well under control; there is no need to fear floods.

Here the canal expands into a pond reflecting the sky, its waters teeming with the fish which themselves form an important part of the harvest from this rich and fertile region. Navigation is no more than a memory, except maybe for the occasional flat-bottomed punt. The ancient canal is overgrown with reeds. But the fishermen put these to good use by fastening the stems together to form screens which, planted deep in the canal mud, create a labyrinth to entrap fish.

(Photo by Jing Hai)

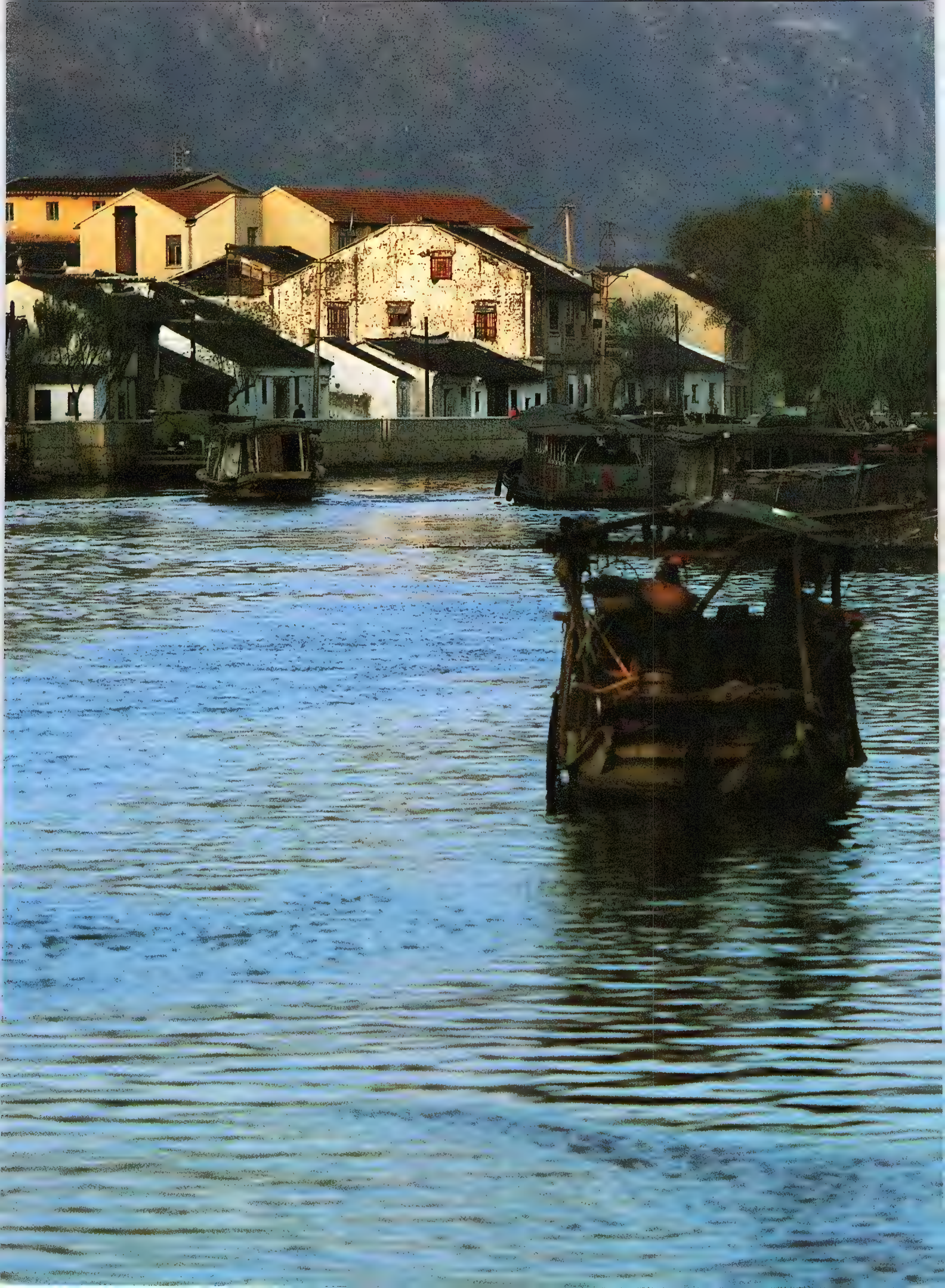


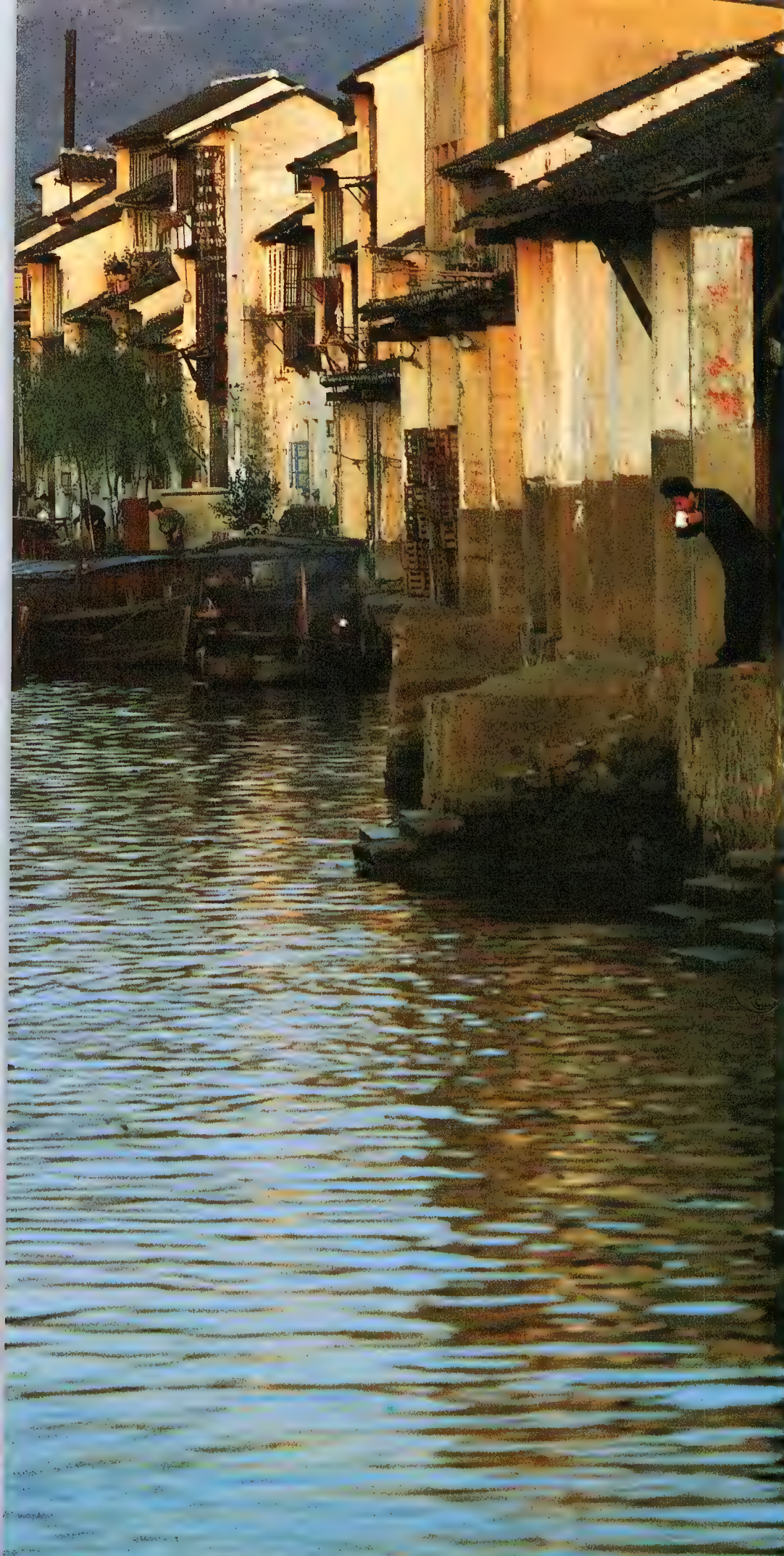


Dongshan, set on a peninsula jutting out into Lake Taihu, is also known as Mo Li Peak after a Sui-dynasty general who once lived there in the sixth century.

Not far to the east, the Grand Canal skirts the fringes of the great lake through a land of milk and honey. Here, flowers bloom all year round and fruits of many kinds are available at any season. The Grand Canal feeds the fishponds, and the dwellings of the local fish-farmers stand out sharply against the verdant setting, their whitewashed walls and black-tiled roofs presenting a marked contrast in the dawn light.


(Photo by Bao Kun, Zhang Haibo, Yu Zhixin & Deng Lili)





The Grand Canal runs right through Wuxi, bisecting this city which has already existed for three thousand years.

To trace the origins of this part of the canal we must go right back to the fifth century B.C. and the times of Prince Fuchai of Wu and, some say, his father Helu before him. From small beginnings — here a natural river-bed dredged, there a connecting channel dug — it has grown to become a vital line of communications ... an economic lifeline which, to this day, continues to play a significant role for the nation's livelihood.

Canal people have lived and multiplied in this spot for many centuries, each generation in turn rocked, soothed and nurtured by the waters of the Grand Canal and the prosperity they bring with them. 

(Photo by Liu Shizhao)

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

The Grand Canal: Glimpses of Land and People (II)

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN,
DENG LILI, YU ZHIXIN &
ZHANG HAIBO
ARTICLE BY BAO KUN



*Enjoying a competitive game of
croquet in Peixian*



In our last issue we covered the four northern sections of the Grand Canal between the start of the River Tonghui north of Beijing and Tai'erzhuang, the end of the Lu Canal, on the Shandong/Jiangsu border — a distance of more than one thousand kilometres.

Tai'erzhuang is now the point of departure for our exploration by boat and on foot of the southern reaches of this mighty project, the work of countless dynasties. As we saw last month, the location of the capital and the specific outlook of the individual dynasties determined their degree of interest in moving troops and merchandise by water. Particular progress in expanding the canal network was made under the Sui emperor Yangdi (reign dates 604-618) from his capital in Luoyang; further refinements were added by the Yuan emperor Kublai Khan (reign dates 1260-1294). But even earlier, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770-221 B.C.), enterprising kingdoms in southeastern China had excavated what were some of the earliest man-made waterways in the world.



From Peasant to Emperor

From Tai'erzhuang we crossed into Jiangsu following the course of the fifth of the, in all, seven sections of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal — the Zhong (Middle) Canal — which covers a distance of 223 kilometres as far as Huai'an.

The first major stop along the Grand Canal in Jiangsu Province is Peixian. Small as it is, the county town is famous in history as the birthplace of Liu Bang (256-195 B.C.), a peasant rebel who rose against all odds to become the first emperor of the Western Han dynasty. Walking round the town, I found more than a few shops bearing the name Da Feng (Strong Gale). I was told that the people of Peixian are fond of this phrase since Liu Bang once wrote a song entitled *The Song of the Gale* when he was passing through his home town while on campaign:

*It is blowing a gale
And clouds sail and drift fast.
Home am I,
Now that my power is felt
everywhere.
If only I can find brave warriors
Who will help garrison
The four corners of the land.*

Most of the town's parks are built along the embankments of the canal and seem to be a favourite rendezvous for retired folk who spend a lot of time there taking a nap in the shade, playing chess or croquet.

We made a detour some seventy kilometres to the west to visit Xuzhou, site of more than two hundred great battles over a span of two thousand years. In ancient times this was a settlement at the confluence of the canal dug by the State of Wei in the Warring States Period — then known as the River Bianshui — and the Sishui, a tributary of the River Huaihe. Xuzhou was thus a hub of water communications between the Yangtse and Huaihe valleys from the fourth century B.C., the door to northern China and such major cities on the Central Plains as Kaifeng and Luoyang. Its strategic location was one of the main reasons it was so frequently fought over. But now the ancient canal is the very picture of serenity; not a single craft disturbed its rippling emerald waters as I strolled beside it. Nevertheless, this old spur is now a feeder canal for the Grand Canal,

enabling coal to be transported from the coal-mining areas round Xuzhou to industrial centres further south, including Shanghai.

'Moved Overnight'

South of Peixian is fish-filled Lake Luoma, which covers an area of about 270 square kilometres. The canal skirts the edge of the lake, which is separated from it by a huge dyke (in former times the canal ran right through the lake). Since the lake is higher than the canal, when the level of the water in the canal falls for any reason, water can be let in from the lake, and this section of canal remains navigable year-round. Sauntering along the dyke, you see a canal a hundred metres wide with clear, free-flowing waters — such a different picture from the water-impoverished, sluggish northern parts of the Grand Canal.

After walking for about two hours, we were just approaching Suqian when we sighted a flotilla of sampans moving slowly towards us. Black and white cormorants crowded the perches over the small crafts' gunwales. The shouts of the fishermen as they encouraged their

birds and the splashing of the oars travelled to us across the water. This method of fishing is still quite common in the south of China; the bird's throat is constricted with a loop of string so that it can catch fish but not swallow them. Instead it takes them back to the boat to which it is tethered. At the end of the day the cormorant is rewarded with a share of the catch.

The town of Suqian, with a population of over 50,000, is bounded by water on three sides: the Grand Canal to the east, the abandoned course of the Huanghe (Yellow River) to the west, and Lake Luoma to the northwest. According to the historical records, the flooding of the Huanghe has on several occasions forced the town's inhabitants to move its location. A popular tale states that, when the Huanghe overflowed in 1576 during the Ming dynasty, the people of

Along the southern reaches, cormorant fishing is still common (1, by Gao Mingyi), and dogs tend ducks not sheep (2, by Lu Bing). Happy canaltown dwellers: the shoe-sole lady in Baoying (3) and a Suqian donkey driver (4).







2

Suqian had to seek safety on higher ground and move all their belongings in a single night. Hence its name, which literally means 'moved overnight'.

Suqian is said to be the birthplace of one of Liu Bang's contemporaries, his sometime ally and eventual adversary Xiang Yu, a ruthless noble of the State of Chu who for a while called himself king and made Xuzhou his capital. Some time after Liu Bang had founded the Han dynasty, Xiang Yu — outnumbered and surrounded — committed suicide in 202 B.C. at the age of thirty-two.

Today, life in Suqian seems fairly leisurely. You might see a donkey

the Grand Canal — was also the northern terminal of the Hangou Canal. This latter was the earliest of all the waterways which were linked up to form the Grand Canal, and was dug under the orders of Prince Fuchai of Wu in 486 B.C., towards the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, in order to facilitate troop movements. The old canal stretched 185 kilometres from Yangzhou to Huai'an. As part of his massive project, Emperor Yangdi of the Sui dynasty later had the Hangou Canal straightened and shortened to 150 kilometres, and had roads built and willow trees planted along it. The embankments of the Li Canal tower eight metres

here, but plenty of ducks swimming about under the vigilant eye of a 'duck dog', which stood on a sampan ready to raise the warning should they stray too far. Hexia used to be known as the 'town where night never falls', because its shops stayed open all night. The *Annals of Huai'an Prefecture* compiled in the Qing dynasty relate that: 'Boats on water and vehicles on land crowd together and the shops are well-stocked — this seems to be a big town north of the River Yangtse'. It owed its expansion and prosperity to the Grand Canal, and gradually declined when a new channel was opened up in 1958 not far west of the ancient Hangou



3



4

pulling a loaded cart come to a stop and sidle over to tug at a tempting patch of grass by the canalside. The driver is not annoyed; he just lets the donkey graze a while. In northern China horses and donkeys are common beasts of burden, whereas southerners tend to prefer water buffaloes for wet ploughing and operating waterwheels. Here in Suqian, which is a sort of intermediate point, there are still plenty of horses and donkeys around.

Where Night Never Fell

Huai'an, the start of the Li (Inner) Canal — the sixth section of

above the ground today, and the surface of the water is five metres above ground-level — forming a sort of 'hanging' waterway which has in the past produced catastrophic flooding, with great loss of life and damage to crops.

The prosperous former grain port of Huai'an boasts some famous sons, among them the late premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) and Wu Cheng'en (c. 1500-1560), author of the classic novel *Journey to the West*.

We went ashore in the small town of Hexia near Huai'an. There were not many boats on the canal

Canal to allow passage to ships over 2,000 tons.

Today the flagstoned streets of the town are even and straight and lined with many shops, although these no longer conduct business round the clock.

Shelduck goslings (1, by Ren Zhenbei) which will later lay double-yolked eggs in Gaoyou, also known for its rope-making (4). Baoying women go in for fancy hair styles incorporating fresh flowers (2), while some fisherfolk submerge themselves fully clothed to make their catch (3, by Ma Yaojun).

The Women of Baoying

The landscape changes completely as the canal flows on south to Baoying. The endless expanses of the north give way to a dense network of rivers, creeks and irrigation channels which thread through paddy fields and lotus ponds intersected by earth dykes — a bright mosaic of greens, browns and blues. The villages here seem like so many islets, with boats the only means of making your way between them.

The wharf at Baoying is quite a busy place due to its location not too far north of the River Yangtse; this is where 'north' starts to meet 'south', and the merchandise stacked on the quayside reflects that in its variety. On one street corner I noticed

an elderly woman who had arranged a pile of rags neatly on a table. She was sticking the bits of cloth together with paste to form a thick layer from which she cut shoe-soles. She then stitched the soles with hemp thread to make them firmer. The thicker the sole, the more comfortable.

Regardless of their age, these women of Baoying like to make themselves attractive. They all seem to wear hair ornaments and fresh flowers picked out in the country, even one old lady the wrong side of seventy carrying two pails of night soil. Dressed in blue or black — unlike their northern sisters who prefer red and other bright colours — they manage to look very neat and dainty.

Canalside Sights

After a night's rest in Baoying we continued south by boat to Gaoyou, where the canal attains a maximum width of over one kilometre, the widest section of the whole Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal.

Walking along the asphalted road beside the canal I met lots of children twisting rope. Many boatmen stop off here to replenish their supplies and get repairs done. Mooring ropes are thus always in great demand and these children have already discovered the best way to earn some extra money.

Duck-breeding is another major occupation of Gaoyou people. The shelducks raised in the town are well-known since their eggs are



double-yolked and much in demand for export. We went straight to a duck farm where I managed to buy two of these eggs, each weighing about 250 grams. After boiling the eggs later, I cut them in half and was delighted to find that, as expected, each of them had two yolks. Apparently, even three and four yolks are not uncommon.

Ever since embarking on this section, the Li Canal, in northern Jiangsu, we had been deafened by the chugging of engines; the water traffic had become progressively heavier as we travelled south. Apart from barges carrying coal from the north, there were countless fishing boats active along the canal. As we approached Yangzhou, we often saw fishermen wearing palm-bark

raincoats and conical bamboo hats casting nets from their boats; some simply spread a large dragnet along the canal from the banks and raised the net from time to time on a pulley system to see what they had caught. What intrigued us most, however, was the method used by others who were fishing individually in the shallows with a bamboo trap held round their body. Whenever they saw a fish, they just plumped themselves down, trap and all, and grappled for the fish with their hands, throwing it into the small creel they carried.

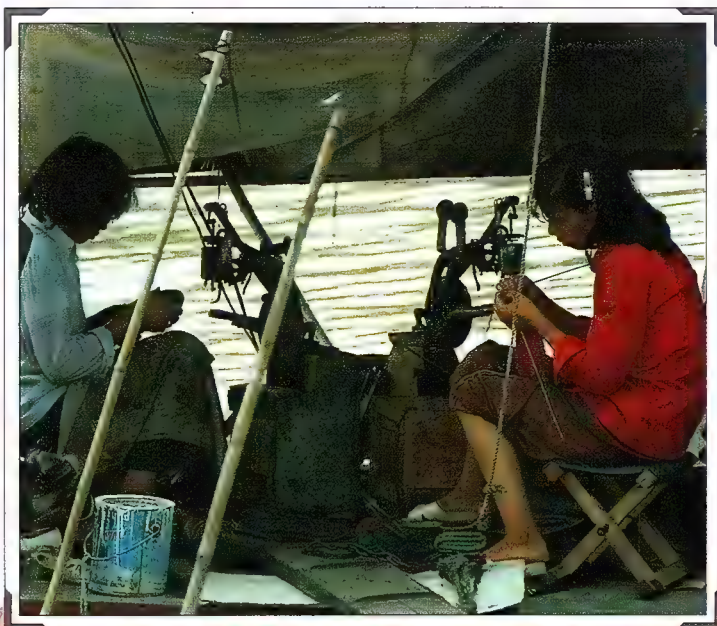
You also see floating shops on the canal providing small services and supplies. On arrival at Yangzhou, I saw a boat belonging to a cobbler with two shoe-repairing



2



3



4

machines at the bow to attract the attention of any boat dwellers who might need their shoes mended.

Yangzhou Story-Tellers

When Emperor Yangdi of the Sui dynasty had the canal widened and extended on a grand scale, one of his intentions was to make it easier to travel to Jiangdu (present-day Yangzhou) by boat. The magnificence and expense of his first pleasure trip was staggering. Eighty thousand trackers were needed to haul the imperial fleet, which stretched for over a hundred kilometres! We are told that the emperor had forty temporary palaces built along the Grand Canal for his comfort, and that his four-decked dragon boat was encrusted with gold and jade. This first trip lasted for six months. If the emperor had had to travel by land, commandeering hundreds and thousands of sedan-chair bearers and vast numbers of horses, the undertaking would have been even more time-consuming and complicated. In his short but turbulent reign Yangdi managed to fit in another two trips, the third one stretching into a two-year stay in Yangzhou where he was assassinated by his own generals. Another imperial tourist enamoured of Yangzhou's beauty, in particular the Slender West Lake, was Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty (reign dates 1735-1796).

But Yangzhou was much more than a pleasure resort. From its

beginnings as the first ever port on the ancient Hangou Canal it reached a commercial peak in the mid-Tang dynasty in the eighth century when it was still only ninety kilometres from the sea. It became the major transshipment point for grain and other goods between north and south, and a magnet for foreign merchants. At that time, Yangzhou is said to have been the greatest trading metropolis on earth. But then, as the Yangtse's northern banks silted up and as the sea outlet moved ever further east, Yangzhou lost its exclusive status and became just one of many cities along the Grand Canal. In the late nineteenth century, with the general decline in the salt and grain trade and the opening up of the north-south railway, Yangzhou's population dwindled and its commercial life declined.

Today, despite its recent industrial reawakening, Yangzhou retains an atmosphere which is genuinely unlike that of any other city. Its long, narrow streets hide innumerable cultural treasures such as the story-telling in the local dialect, rhythmic and rhyming, which is so pleasant to the ear. Story-telling, an ancient performing art in China, was flourishing in the

Rice straw, set to dry in stacks of sundry shapes (2), smothers barges moored near Zhenjiang (1). In Yangzhou, story-telling is still an honoured art (3). A floating cobbler's workshop (4).

Qing dynasty (1644-1911) when Yangzhou was at its zenith as a salt-trading centre. Even today, one way to find a teahouse in Yangzhou is to follow the resonant sound of a story-teller's voice. The typical teahouse is elegantly decorated, with delicately carved latticework. You are served hot tea and a plate of melon seeds. The story-teller gesticulates as he narrates, his voice rising a good octave as his story reaches its climax.

South of the Yangtse

The Grand Canal enters the vast Yangtse at Liuwei south of Yangzhou and recommences at the Jianbi Lock just east of Zhenjiang. This is the start of the Jiangnan (South of the Yangtse) Canal, the southernmost section of the Grand Canal, which covers 340 kilometres before terminating at Hangzhou,



capital of neighbouring Zhejiang Province.

The basis of this section was the 62-kilometre-long canal dug by three thousand convicts in 210 B.C., on the orders of Emperor Shihuang of the Qin dynasty, to link up with the Hangou Canal north of the Yangtse and strengthen his control of these southern regions.

Known as the 'key to the southeast' since antiquity, Zhenjiang itself has long been a major crossroads for waterborne traffic. From its beginnings as a ferry crossing on the Yangtse in around the third century B.C., Zhenjiang

Mourners near Danyang (1), and a Wuxi bird-breeder (2). Further south, Hushuguan is famous for its straw mats (3, by Liu Shizhao).





2



3

developed rapidly with the opening of the Jiangnan Canal in the early seventh century and reached a peak of prosperity under the Northern Song (960-1127). The city's trade links spread from Shandong in the north to cities further south along the Grand Canal, and from Hunan in the west to Shanghai and eastern coastal ports along the River Yangtse. Silk, timber, *tung* oil, sugar and tropical fruits from the south and west were exchanged here for walnuts, dates and peanuts from the north.

Threading its way through a network of waterways with ponds every few kilometres, our ship moored at the Nianyutao Wharf in Zhenjiang in the vicinity of barges piled high with rice straw destined for a nearby paper mill. This reminded us that it was the harvest season. Farmers in the villages through which we passed were indeed busy as bees reaping, threshing, and piling up stacks as high as houses, some rectangular, others rounded or triangular in shape — a picturesque sight.

Continuing southeast along the canal we soon arrived at Danyang, where the Grand Canal is at its narrowest. By chance we happened upon a funeral procession, not nearly as grandiose as the one we had witnessed in Shandong Province on the first stage of our journey, although the atmosphere was much more solemn. At the head of the short procession were two people in white mourning clothes carrying a colourful paper sedan-chair to be burned for the deceased to use in the after-life, followed by the bereaved son in heavy mourning who cleared the way for the coffin. Sobbing relatives brought up the rear. The son would kneel down every fifty or sixty paces and kowtow; he would keep this up until they reached the grave site.

In Danyang the stone animal statues at the tombs of the Qi and Liang emperors of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-581) are well worth seeing. They provide a vivid idea of the civilization of the south in those early times.

Wuxi's Rice Market

Some twenty kilometres by boat from Danyang, we passed through the city district of Changzhou, an ancient town — now the largest textile producer in Jiangsu after Shanghai — whose fortunes have always been linked with the Grand Canal, before continuing to Wuxi on Lake Taihu. Wuxi is a veritable hive of industry, with boats big and small moored all along the wharves, and goods being loaded and unloaded in a confusion of shouts and cries from the dock workers. Shops along both banks lead into the heart of the city.

We went out of our way to visit Beitang Street beside the River Xianhe in the northern part of the city, because it is the site of Wuxi's famous rice market. Only about four metres wide and little more than one kilometre long, the street looks unworthy of its reputation. Yet this is one of China's four major rice markets, the others being Changsha in Hunan, Jiujiang in Jiangxi and Wuhu in Anhui. Wuxi of course owes its prosperity not only to the fact that it is sitting in the middle of one of China's most fertile areas, but also to the Grand Canal, which has so facilitated trade movements



over the centuries. In the late Qing dynasty there were as many as a hundred rice traders in Beitang Street and rice was regarded as the 'senior of all Wuxi's trades'.

Today, an endless stream of pedestrians moves along the street which is lined with shops selling rice, but also soy beans, peanuts, sesame seeds, and cereals of all kinds. There was also a bird-fanciers' shop. Curious, I went up to ask the owner the name of one bird species. He told me it was a sort of canary known in Chinese as *furong*

of Suzhou, a township known as Hushuguan. Covering an area of a mere four square kilometres, this place nevertheless has a national reputation for its straw mats. I got up early and went for a stroll along the quay. Hawkers were everywhere with their straw wares; some were selling them from boats moored alongside. Hagglng with potential customers, they created a din that was not at all unpleasant to the ear. The Suzhou dialect is known for its lilting pitch, and the local voices tend to be soft and sweet with a

sioners would sit chatting for ages over a cup.

Suzhou itself, with its many creeks and bridges, is often referred to as China's Venice. To its west is Lake Taihu, one of the Grand Canal's major natural freshwater reservoirs, to its east a number of smaller lakes. In addition to some two hundred creeks spanned by 163 bridges big and small, the Grand Canal flows through the city, which has kept its layout intact since the twelfth century. Most of the old dwellings have a street on one side and a creek on the other, with a flight of stone steps outside leading down to a tiny landing stage. These buildings by the water with their black roof-tiles and thick white-washed walls, the winding creeks, the exquisite gardens hiding behind high walls, the air of ancient sophistication and culture ... all this produces a townscape typical of Jiangnan (the Chinese term for this area of land and waters south of the Yangtse, synonymous with southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang).

porting incoming and outgoing merchants; Hangzhou is situated a relatively short distance up the estuary of the Qiantang which runs out into Hangzhou Bay and the East China Sea. But the silting problem at the confluence became so severe that the final stretch between the city and the river was unnavigable by the Ming dynasty.

Surrounded by hills in which are to be found tea plantations producing some of China's premier teas, its banks dotted with pavilions, the West Lake is one of Hangzhou's major attractions for locals and tourists alike. People flock to the West Lake to read, play chess, indulge in a spot of courting, do their morning exercises and practise *taijiquan* (shadow boxing), or just gossip in peace.... The waters of the West Lake are as blue as ever, its landscapes as enchanting (although typhoon winds recently damaged hundreds of mature trees around the lakeside).

Hangzhou makes a fine setting in which to think back over our experiences along the Grand Canal. We have seen how the scenery changes gradually from the bare, wide-open expanses of the north to the green and fertile lands of the south, with corresponding changes in lifestyle. For us this was a journey that mirrored the immensity and diversity of China itself, an adventure to be savoured for many years to come.

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

Astonishingly 'punk', a young water-rat sports the traditional auspicious lock (1, by Yu Zhixin); breakfast on a canalside teahouse (3); afloat on the Grand Canal (4, by Gao Mingyi). An entire family at taijiquan practice in Hangzhou (2).



2



3

(hibiscus), with orange or olive plumage. Despite evidence of ancient trades and callings, Wuxi today is a big industrial centre with a population of almost a million, and one of China's largest silk producers. It is lucky that it has managed to preserve so much of the charm of its old town centre around the wharves.

Suzhou and Around

Beyond Wuxi, we came to the first port within the larger territory

lingering tone (even the men!), quite unlike the strong and uncompromising tones of the north.

This township is only fifteen kilometres from Suzhou. Walking along the banks of the Jiangnan Canal, we noted that local people are very fond of tea. Many boats by the banks had been fitted out as floating teahouses and were packed with customers. People on their way to work would call in for breakfast, washing down fried dough sticks with plenty of tea; old-age pen-



4





Photo by Gao Mingyi

GRAND CANAL (II)

Stories Behind the Relics (II)

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN, DENG LILI,
YU ZHIXIN & ZHANG HAIBO
ILLUSTRATED BY WANG XIAOBIN
ARTICLE BY SHEN XINGDA



1



2

Photo by Ma Yaojun

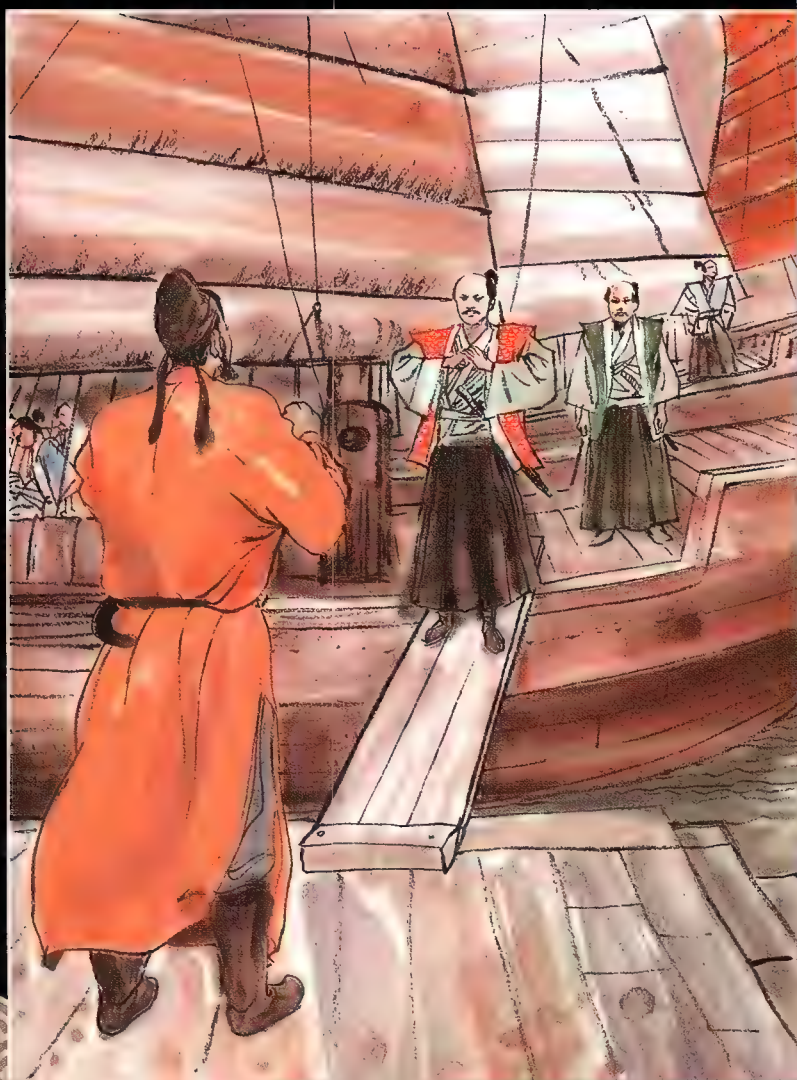
There is many a site associated with an event or person of historical interest along the 1,780 kilometres of the mighty Grand Canal which links Beijing with Hangzhou. In the first part of this article — published in our last issue — we introduced a few of them in Hebei, Shandong and a small part of Jiangsu. Here we shall be concentrating on relics, and anecdotes connected with them, in Jiangsu Province, working our way from north to south.

An Envoy from a Distant Land

The precinct of the municipal library to the east of a small town called Wangying in Huaiyin in northern Jiangsu contains the tomb of an envoy from the Ryukyu Islands (modern Japan's Okinawa Prefecture). When you look closely at what, on first appearance, seems a very ordinary tomb [1], you see characters carved on the stone tablet in front which indicate that this is the tomb of Lord Zhen Wenjin, an envoy from the Kingdom of Ryukyu to the Chinese capital. At the bottom of the tablet there is a line of explanation: 'The lord, who came as an envoy in the fifty-eighth year of the Qianlong reign, died en route on November 14, and was buried here'. The fifty-eighth year of the reign of the Qing emperor Qianlong corresponds to 1793.

How did this foreign nobleman come to be in Wangying? The fact is that the Ryukyu Islands, whose king held court at Shuri (now in Naha), sent their first envoy to China as early as 1372 during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) at a time when they were under China's political sphere of influence. By 1451 they were paying tribute to both China and Japan, and emissaries continued to make many visits during the subsequent Qing dynasty (1644-1911) until the Ryukyus were fully integrated into Japan in 1879.

Inevitably, a large part of the journey within China involved travel along the Grand Canal. Huaiyin, an ancient city located at the confluence of the River Huaihe and the canal, was a hub of water transport and a renowned ship-building centre during Ming and Qing times. Wangying on the opposite







3

Photo by Mao Yongkuan



5



4



6

bank also shared in this prosperity; it was a flourishing commercial town from the mid-eighteenth century, when it boasted more than two thousand households and countless restaurants, inns and so on. There was a constant flow of officials, merchants and travellers from far and near, but somewhere in all this confusion the death, for whatever reason, of the envoy from the distant Ryukyus did not go unremembered.

Early Links with Japan

Diplomatic activity was if anything even livelier under the outward-looking policies of the earlier Tang dynasty (618-907). For example, according to the historical records, there were thirteen Japanese envoys to the Tang court over the more than 260 years between 630 and 894. At that time, the Japanese still looked to China for progress in many fields. Chinese writing had been adopted by the scholars of Japan's Yamato imperial clan in the fourth century and Buddhism introduced from China in 552. There were also many cultural and social borrowings: the famous Japanese tea ceremony is based on Tang-dynasty tea-drinking practices.

During the early part of the period, the Japanese envoys would travel in their own ships as far as the coast east of Huai'an before transferring to special vessels sent by the imperial court. Sailing north along sections of the Grand Canal excavated during the Sui dynasty (581-618), they would first call at Bianzhou (present-day Kaifeng in Henan), then Luoyang, and finally the Tang capital Chang'an (Xi'an in Shaanxi Province). Later, ships tended to discharge their passengers either at Yangzhou or even further southeast at Mingzhou (now Ningbo in Zhejiang Province). In any event, however, travellers had to pass through Huai'an on their way north. In acknowledgement of the city's importance for the canal, a stone tablet [2] bearing the characters 古運河 (Ancient Canal) was erected north-east of Huai'an at the Western Gate Dock of the Hangou Canal, the very earliest part of the Grand Canal, completed in 486 B.C.

Flood-Subduing Iron Ox

In the small town of Shaobo, south of Gaoyou, there is an iron ox 1.5 metres long, 0.45 metres high and 0.8 metres wide [3]. Weighing more than a ton, it was cast in 1701 during the Qing dynasty and was originally erected at a bend of the Grand Canal which then became known as Niuwan (Ox Bay).

Due to its location on the east bank of the Li Canal at the outlet to Lake Shaobo, the town was particularly threatened during the flood season when

waters swollen by the River Huaihe, Lake Hongze and Lake Gaoyou rushed through the narrow entrance on their way to the River Yangtse. As the ancient Chinese had the custom of setting an iron ox by a river or lake as a symbolic means of controlling the waters and the dragons which lurked in them, it is no wonder that Shaobo's past inhabitants cast in all nine oxen, two tigers and one chicken (all beasts thought to protect against natural calamities) and placed them along the dyke in an effort to stem the floods.

The iron ox we show, retrieved from the muddy bed of the canal, is obviously one of the original nine oxen, the others having been swept away. On its back are inscribed several lines of characters: 'Metal being harder than wood, the water dragon no longer dares to show itself. Earth can curb water, and the ox for ever controls the waters of this kingdom'. I was told that the ox's muzzle actually acted as a sort of early-warning device; if the water level reached that point, there was bound to be a disastrous flood.

Moslem Tomb Overlooking the Canal

Today the River Yangtse flows fifteen kilometres south of Yangzhou. But during the Tang dynasty it ran right past the city, so ocean-going craft could sail to the feet of its walls. Its favourable location on the Grand Canal plus the fact that, at that time, it was just ninety kilometres from the sea along the Yangtse meant that Yangzhou was a major international seaport in the days before the Yangtse estuary silted up. Many a tale about the foreign traders and visitors who flocked there circulated among the local people. One of the most interesting deals with Puhaddin and his will.

Puhaddin was an Arab said to be the sixteenth-generation descendant in a direct line from the prophet Mohammed, founder of the Islamic faith. He came to Yangzhou as a missionary for Islam and stayed there for ten years (1265-1274) during the Southern Song dynasty. During that time he helped build one of China's four most famous mosques, the Xianhe (Fairy Crane) Mosque in Yangzhou.

Later he sailed up the Grand Canal to Jinan in Shandong Province to spread the teachings of the Koran. In the year 1275, he was on his way back to Yangzhou by boat when he fell ill and died just as he was approaching his destination. On the body the boatman found Puhaddin's last will and testament addressed to his good friend, the Governor of Guangling. In his will he expressed the desire to be buried on the east bank of the Grand Canal from where he would be able to watch the waters rolling by for all eternity. The governor duly had Puhaddin's tomb erected in that spot [4].



Photo by Liu Shizhao



7



8

Over the course of the dynasties, the small green hill on which Puhaddin's tomb stands became a cemetery for the Moslem community of Yangzhou. There are now twenty-five tombs there.

Marco Polo in Yangzhou

In November 1271 Marco Polo (1254-1324), then aged seventeen, set out for China with his father and uncle — both merchants — from Venice in Italy. The three of them travelled east along the ancient trade routes known as the Silk Road and, after three and a half hard years, arrived in Shangdu (present-day Duolun in Inner Mongolia). There they received a warm welcome from Kublai Khan, the great Mongol leader and founder of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), and were offered high positions.

At Kublai Khan's instigation, Marco Polo undertook a long inspection tour to the south. A large part of his journey consisted of travel along the Grand Canal, of which he obviously retained many vivid memories. In his *Travels*, he records: 'He (the Great Khan) has made a huge canal of great width and depth from river to river and from lake to lake, and made the water flow along it so that it looks like a big river....' Again, talking of the canal, he notes: 'Such a gigantic project is truly remarkable.' When recalling his three years as an official in Yangzhou: 'You must know that this city is so great and powerful that its authority extends over twenty-seven towns, all large and prosperous and actively engaged in commerce.... The people use paper money.... The inhabitants live by trade and industry; for accoutrements for horses and men-at-arms are produced here in great quantities....'

Whether Marco Polo was indeed ever Governor-General of Yangzhou, as some sources profess, is not certain, but Yangzhou now has a memorial hall to the great Venetian [5].

Forgotten Tomb of an Emperor

Talking about historical sites in Yangzhou, one inevitably thinks of the mausoleum of the Sui emperor Yangdi (reign dates 604-618) who did so much to expand the Grand Canal. When we remember how attached he was to Yangzhou and the sybaritic pleasures of the south, there is a certain irony in the manner of his death.

In July 616 he left his capital of Luoyang and travelled south down the Grand Canal to Yangzhou, possibly on a pleasure trip, possibly to take refuge, since the country was seething with peasant uprisings. There in his palace at Jiangdu (as Yangzhou was then known), the tyrant drank and feasted all day and all night and lived, we are led to believe by the chroniclers, a life of general debauchery. He must often have said to his wife, 'A lot of people want to do away with me. But let's forget about it. Let's drink our fill and be merry while we can!'

In March 618, matters came to a head; his troops mutinied and overran the palace, taking the emperor captive. Yangdi requested death by poison. However, this was not permitted and, in the end, he was forced to use his own belt to hang himself.

We are told that the empress and maidservants made him a simple coffin from some planks and lacquered boards and buried him hastily in the palace grounds. Then, in 622, an official who had once served at the Sui court was appointed the local governor. It was he who had Yangdi's remains moved and buried in a fitting manner at Leitang on the northern outskirts of the city [6].

With the passage of time, the imperial tomb gradually fell into oblivion. It was only rediscovered much later by a Qing-dynasty scholar, Ruan Yuan, in 1807. If it were not for the funerary stele that Ruan Yuan had erected before the tomb, who would guess that this bare earth mound is the last resting place of an emperor?

Ancient Jetty on the Yangtse

Zhenjiang on the south bank of the Yangtse is the starting point of the Jiangnan Canal, the southernmost section of the Grand Canal. It has been a major port since ancient times, as anyone travelling by water along the Grand Canal or along the Yangtse inevitably passes this city.

Xiaomatou (Little Jetty) Street [7] in northwestern Zhenjiang dates from

(Continued on page 91)



Hydraulic Master-Works of the Past

PHOTOS BY BAO KUN, DENG LILI,
YU ZHIXIN & ZHANG HAIBO
TEXT BY ZHENG LIANDI



There are vast variations in topography, geology and climate along the 1,780 kilometres of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. Take rainfall for example. In the south the average annual rainfall is more than one metre, while the north may receive only a little over ten centimetres. To make sure that the Grand Canal could be used for navigational purposes all year round, a number of hydraulic projects had to be undertaken at various sections of its length over the dynasties.

Sluice Gates in Eleven Groups

Historically Beijing has always been short of water. When it was made the Yuan capital under Kublai Khan, the dynasty's founder (reign dates 1260-1294), the imperial court decided to dig a canal from Beijing to Tongxian, twenty kilometres to the east, so as to make it possible to transport grain directly from the rice-growing south to the capital (Tongxian had previously been the canal terminus). However, there were two serious problems involved in building such a waterway in the Beijing area: the scarcity of natural water resources and the hills.

The onerous task of finding a solution to these problems was entrusted to a hydraulic engineer named Guo Shoujing. After a thorough survey of the region, he eventually discovered a spring with abundant water and a low sand content thirty-five kilometres north of Beijing at the foot of Longshan Hill in Changping County. From this spring, which was given the name Baifu Fountain, he had a channel dug to lead the water to Lake Wengshan (now Lake Kunming at the Summer Palace), with more springs joining the water course all along

its route, and thence to the Grand Canal at Tongxian. This most northerly section of the canal was known as the River Tonghui. Today, part of the Beijing-Miyun Canal linking Baifu Fountain and Lake Kunming — built only about twenty years ago with the aid of modern equipment — follows more or less the same course as the canal excavated seven hundred years ago.

As Beijing lies twenty metres higher than Tongxian, twenty-four sluice gates were constructed in eleven groups along the River Tonghui during the Yuan dynasty in order to overcome the water level problems along this section. Each sluice gate was made up of more than ten huge planks. When the planks were all slotted into position, that is, when the gate was shut, the water level in the canal might be as much as five metres. To open the sluice gate, the planks were removed one by one. Two or three of these sluice gates were combined to form locks. Where the gradient was steep, the gate on the lower reach of the canal would be closed to retain the water. Once the level in the lock had reached the same level as the upper reach, a boat waiting to go downstream could enter the lock. Then, as the lower gate was opened gradually, the boat could continue to the next lock, and so on.

There is a Qing-dynasty painting entitled *Grain Transport on the River Tonghui* which shows that the canal at that time was equipped with several sluice gates. At periods when the water level was low, the gates would be closed tight and kept closed to conserve water. When boats loaded with grain, travelling upstream, arrived at such a point, their cargo would have to be portered across to boats waiting on the

other side of the gates. This process would be repeated all the way to Beijing.

Traversing the 'Hump' at Nanwang

The worst problem which had to be faced by several dynasties over the centuries was the lack of water along the northern part of the Lu Canal between Linqing and Jining in Shandong Province. The problem was compounded by the fact that the canal here passes through some of the highest land along its entire length, at Nanwang — known as Water Ridge — in particular. How to get the water up and over the 'hump' at Nanwang was a major challenge. During the Yuan dynasty, two dams — Gangcheng and Jinkou — were built on the rivers Wenhe and Sishui respectively to guide their waters to the Grand Canal at Jining, which lies at a low altitude. However, this still provided no solution to the problem at Nanwang. At that time, grain from the south either had to be carted or portered overland over this black spot or transported by sea to Tianjin — a risky undertaking — and then via the Grand Canal to Beijing.

In 1391, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the Huanghe (Yellow River) overflowed and the northern part of the Lu Canal was choked by silt and mud. To overcome this Song Li, a minister of the Ming court, built the Daicun Dam on the River Dawen near Nanwang. This dam blocked the natural course of the river, which was located at a higher altitude than Nanwang, and forced it to flow southwest into the Xiaowen Canal, a 40-kilometre-long artificial waterway which conducted the water down to Nanwang and the Grand Canal,



3



4



Canal with S-Bends

Going south from Dezhou in northern Shandong one notes that the Grand Canal (here the Nan Canal, excavated in 204 under the Eastern Han) meanders in a series of S-bends. And much further south, as one approaches Yangzhou in Jiangsu, there a 30-kilometre-long S-shaped bend.


A zigzag course inevitably increases the distance covered and takes longer than a straight one. So why did the canal follow this course? Even if these sections were dredged from a natural river-bed, why were they not straightened?

The fact is that there are rolling hills around both Dezhou and Yangzhou. If the canal had followed a straight line, the water flow would have been much too fast and furious, making navigation difficult and perhaps impossible. To ensure a gentle flow, the canal zigzags to ease out the gradient. There is a saying: 'Three bends are equal to a sluice gate'. A meandering course not only helps to control the flow rate, it also — playing something of the role of a sluice gate — eliminates the need to construct one.

Using Clear Water to Control Silting

The Grand Canal joins the River Huaihe at Huaiyin (historically known as Qingkou). The main natural reservoir for the canal along this stretch is Lake Hongze. This originally consisted of many scattered small lakes but when, in 1194, the Huanghe usurped the bed of the River Huaihe on its new course to the sea, it interfered with the flow of the upper Huaihe. The waters backed up and merged with the small lakes to form a single large one, Hongze. Over the cen-

turies great quantities of sand and mud were deposited in the lake, resulting in its bed being raised several centimetres every year with a simultaneous reduction in its water-storage capacity. Gradually the lake became a 'hanging lake', its bed rising six to eight metres above the towns and villages in the neighbourhood. Every breach of the embankment was catastrophic.

A man named Pan Jixun, an expert in water conservancy who lived in the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century, finally found a way to solve the complex problem at this point of the Grand Canal. First he extended the Gaojianian Dyke forty kilometres further south to form a reservoir to retain water from the Huaihe, which has a low silt content, and keep the water in the lake at normal levels. This automatically prevented the Huanghe from flowing back into the lake. In addition, Pan narrowed the bed of the river at Huaiyin to make the current stronger and faster, with the result that the silt-laden waters of the Huanghe were flushed out towards the Yellow Sea. The amount of silt deposited by the Huanghe in Lake Hongze was thus greatly reduced, as was the possibility of flooding. But, in 1855, all this hard work was rendered useless as the volatile river again swung away from Huaiyin and surged along the northern side of the Shandong Peninsula into the Bohai Sea, a course it still follows today. 

Translated by Wang Mingjie

A sluice gate at Nanwang (1), and one section of the Daicun Dam (2). Meanders on the Grand Canal (3), and part of the ancient Hangou Canal (4).

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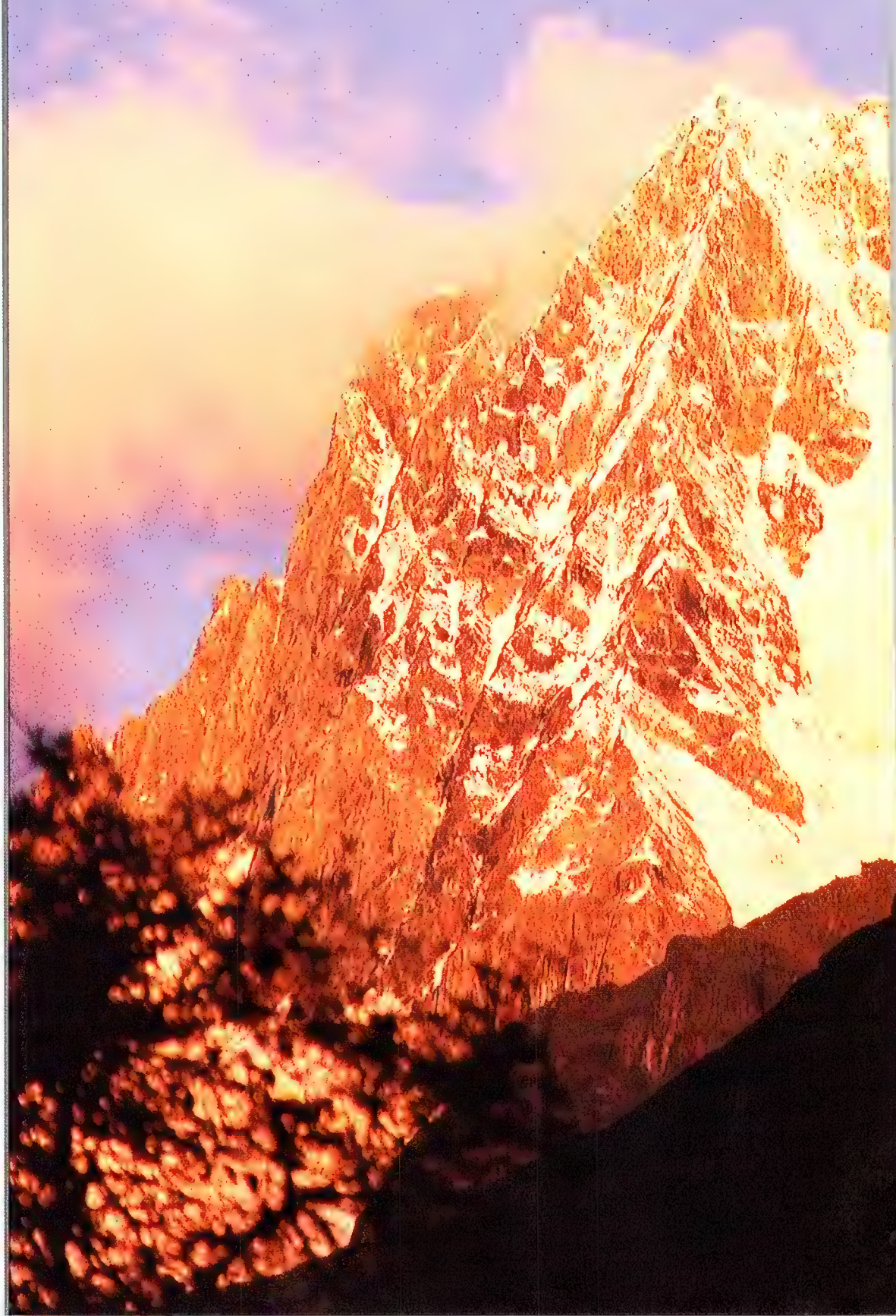
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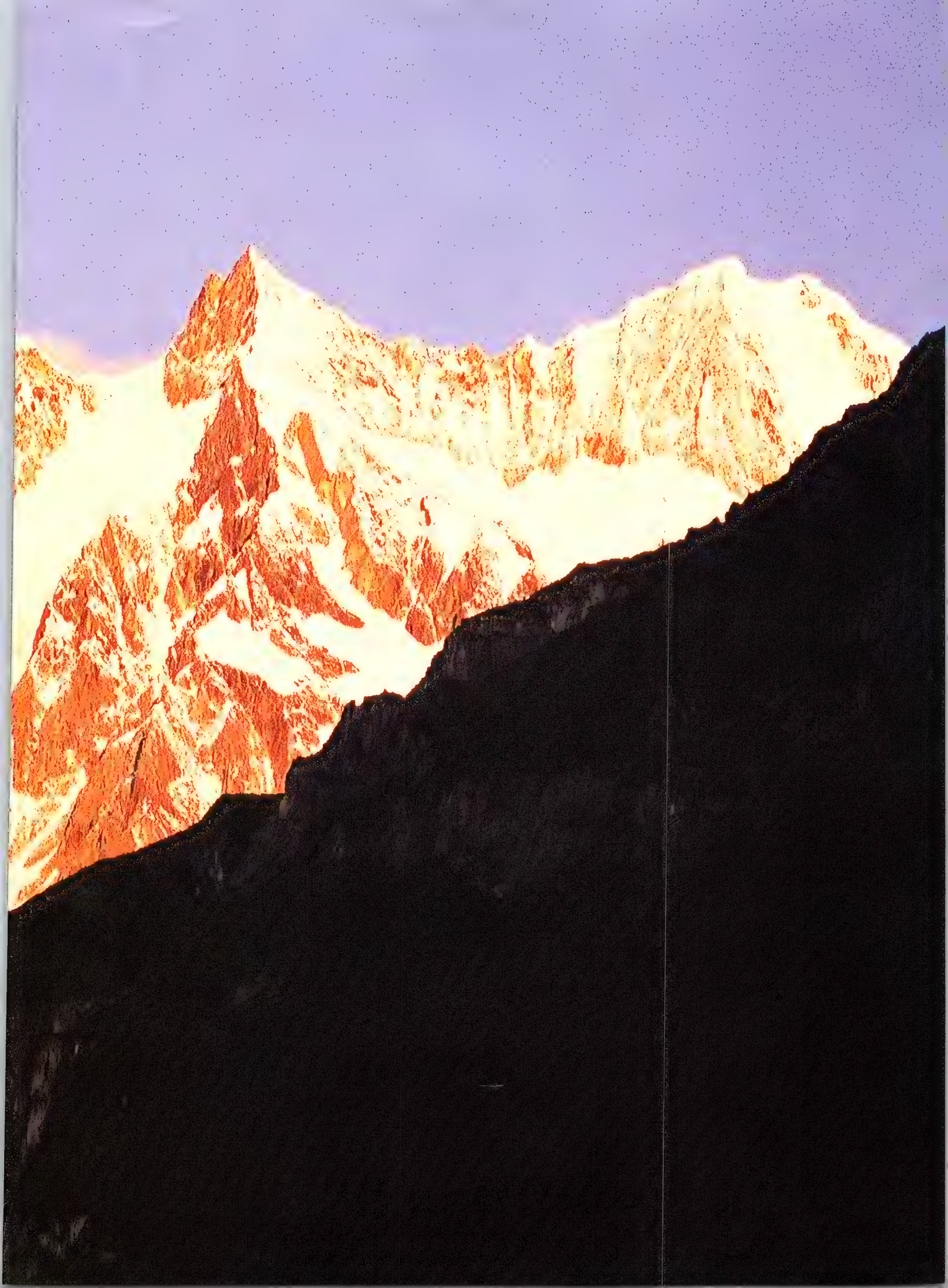


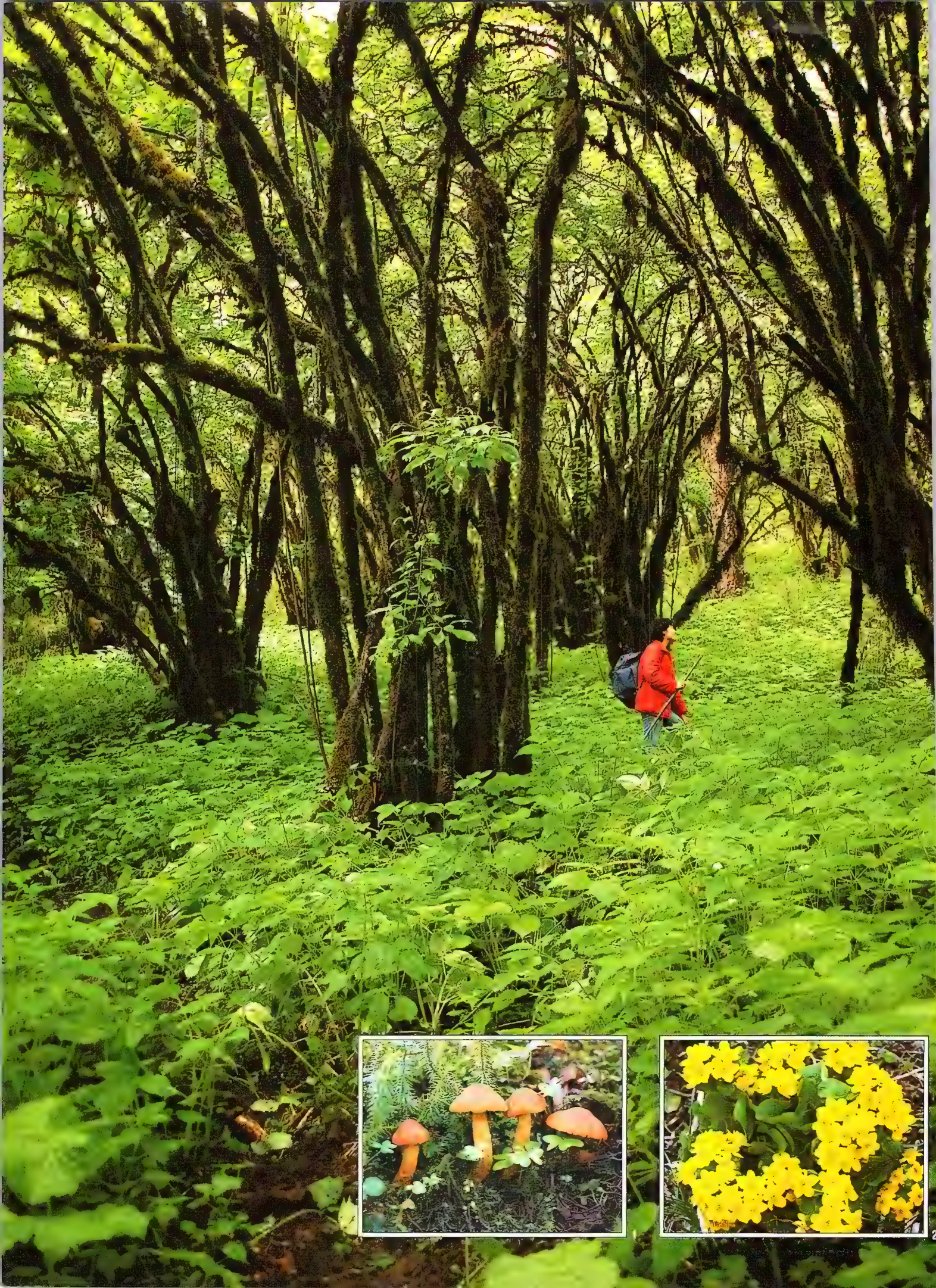
Hailuoguo — In the Shadow of Asia's Lowest Glacier

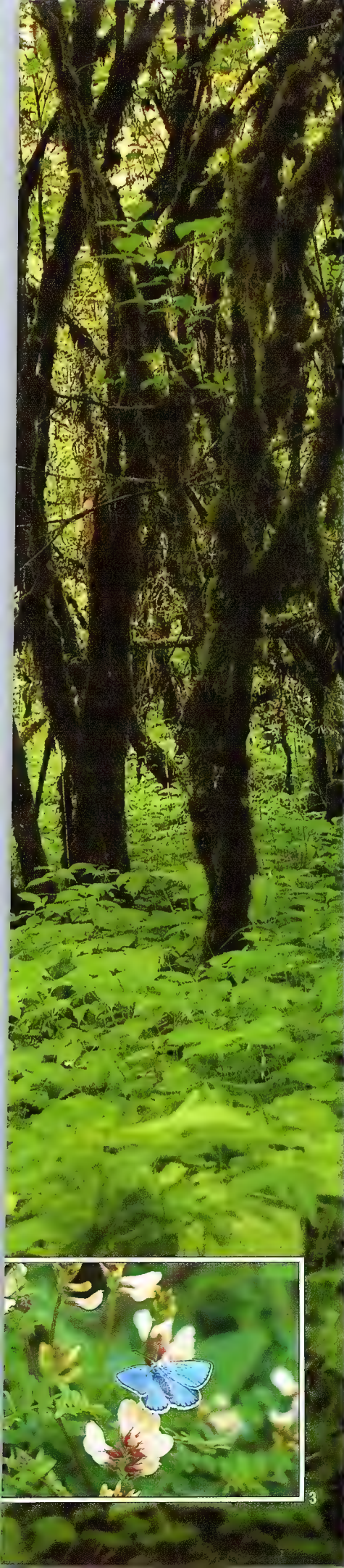
ARTICLE BY YUN SHAN & HU QINGHE



*Sunrise paints Mount
Gongga a rosy gold
(by Huang Yunsheng)*







A recent addition to Sichuan's list of tourist attractions, Hailuogou (Sea Conch Valley) has the distinction of being China's first glacier park. Although located at less than three thousand metres above sea-level, the two hundred square kilometres of the park offer excellent opportunities to view a variety of natural glacier features in a marvellous setting.

Hailuogou is named after a glacier and its valley on the eastern slope of Mount Gongga — at 7,556 metres Sichuan's highest peak — in Luding (Jagsamka) County in western Sichuan's Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Gongga's main peak spawns four glaciers — Dagongba, Xiaogongba, Yanzigou and Hailuogou. With its snout at just 2,800 metres above sea-level, Hailuogou is said to be the lowest glacier in all Asia. It sits in a valley 30.7 kilometres long.

The most convenient way to reach the glacier park is from Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. There are nine buses a day to Luding. Despite the fact that Luding is only about three hundred kilometres southwest of Chengdu, this is a two-day trip since the bus has to negotiate the 3,437-metre-high Mount Erlang. We spent a night in Ya'an, then continued to Luding where we changed buses. After travelling for another two and a half hours we finally reached Moxi, the village which guards the entrance to Hailuogou, located in a ravine at 1,600 metres. Apart from Han Chinese, most of the inhabitants seem to be Yi people. There is only one small street in the village, but it has everything you need, from teahouses and restaurants to stores. All the houses are built of wood, which gives them a rustic charm.

Into Hailuogou on Horseback

After stocking up for our trip, we went to the government tourist reception centre to inquire how to go about entering the glacier park. We were delighted to hear that we could hire horses, which would relieve us of the necess-

ity to tote all our supplies ourselves. You need to bargain hard for the horses, though the average daily charge at that time (November 1987) was only about ten yuan. We also had to take a guide with us.

With a flagstone path twelve kilometres long running from one end to the other, the glacier park contains three campsites, each with an adjoining guesthouse or lodge. Of course, you should not expect too much of accommodation in such a rugged area — the campsites were originally intended for mountaineers attempting the icy slopes of Mount Gongga.

We mounted our horses, or rather ponies, cautiously. These were a special highland breed from Sichuan and very surefooted. They turned out to be docile and easy to handle, and we had no problems as we proceeded in single file along the narrow path.

Our cavalcade crossed an iron chain bridge and advanced alongside the River Hailuo. It was not deep, but its waters were pure and sparkling; you could clearly see the pebbles on the bottom. Along its banks, scattered among paddy fields, were the thatched homes of the Yi tribespeople. But the dwellings became fewer as we moved on through groves of bamboos and palms so green that they glowed in the sun. Occasionally we encountered other visitors who had chosen to enter the park on foot. Through the swaying palm fronds we caught glimpses of the snowy-white peaks of Gongga.

The weather was exceptionally warm considering that it was November and that we were more than a thousand metres above sea-level. In our light garments we did not feel at all cold. This can be explained by the special features of Hailuogou. The valley is surrounded on all sides by mountains which shelter it from the wind and trap the heat from the sun. Thus the temperature always remains at around freezing point, even in the glacier zone. This was good news for us southerners, who had been expecting much worse conditions.

After a four-hour ride we approached the first camp. The slopes up behind were covered with mature azaleas and rhododendrons. Our guide told us that the whole valley is a sea of exceptionally large blossoms in the spring. Although it was not the right time for azaleas while we were there, there were lots of wild



Hailuogou's dense woodlands conceal a myriad natural beauties (1, 3 and 4 by Huang Yunsheng, 2 by Lin Yiping), and rustic structures which merge with their sylvan setting (5, by Chen Donglin).

flowers in the valley, their mauve, yellow and pure white dazzling against the green of the slopes.

The camp boasted a natural hot spring at a temperature of around 40°C. However, it was still early and, as we knew there was a more famous one ahead, we continued our journey after lunch.

Through Thick Forests

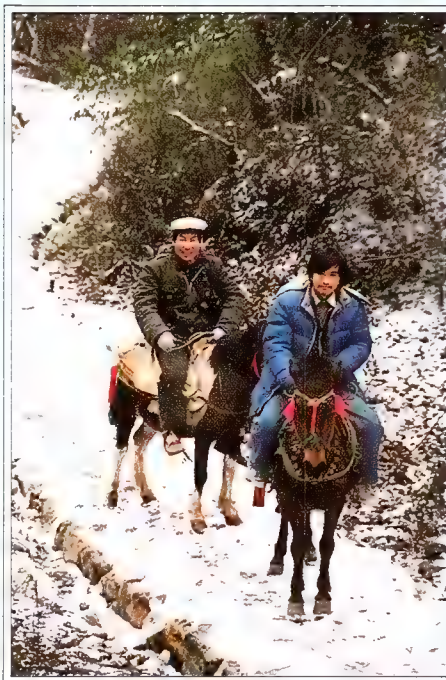
We came to an ancient forest soon after leaving the first camp, with trees towering straight up from the forest floor. Their foliage blotted out the sky and the sun could only penetrate through the odd chink in the dense cover. The individual sunrays shining through the shady woodlands made us feel that we had entered some world apart.

These trees were very different from those we had seen earlier. As we moved deeper into the forest, firs and pines became more numerous and white poplars and silver birches took the place of palm-trees and bamboos. Without realizing it, we had made an abrupt transition from the subtropics to the arctic. The second camp was only 5.8 kilometres from the first, but we noticed a definite drop in temperature during our ride and eventually had to dig out warmer clothes. Such a rapid change in climate and plant life over such a short distance is rare indeed.

The damp forest floor was carpeted by a thick layer of withered branches and rotting leaves which gave under the horses' hooves with a rhythmic sound. We were discussing the strange shapes of the trees and the beauty of the flowers along our way when we were confronted with a twenty-metre-high tree, its trunk so enormous that not even twenty people would be able to clasp hands around it. The trunk was covered with many species of epiphytes — we counted more than twenty, including several types of magnolia, primroses and Chinese yew. Nearer the roots the trunk was overgrown with moss and fungi in various shades of brown. According to scientific records, over 4,800 plant species have so far been discovered in Hailuogou. To this we must add around four hundred animal species, including deer, takin and the giant panda, and birds such as the Beijing nightingale and the babbler. However, we did not see any animals during our stay; we just heard the occasional chattering of monkeys in the woods on either side of the path. They have obviously learnt to keep well out of the reach of humans.

Continuing, we came to a triangular shelter, a sort of lean-to made from branches and dried grass. Despite its rough appearance, it was

welcome after our long ride. We dismounted and rested for around an hour before setting off again for camp two. We wanted to arrive before nightfall. We passed a fork leading to the third camp at one point but, since we had made plans to spend the night in the second camp,



we ignored it and stuck to our original course. The flagstone path suddenly started to rise sharply and the horses' pace slowed, while we felt the temperature dropping steadily. A few spots of rain landed on my face. When I made to wipe them off, I discovered that they were half-melted snowflakes. We gave a happy cheer and reached into our bags for our hooded down jackets which we needed for the short distance to camp through the light snow.

'Hot Water Dale'

This second campsite is named after a boiling hot natural spring which becomes a steaming waterfall as it flows down the rock-face. The steam swirling above the surface, together with the red and green leaves sprinkled with snow all around, produced a truly delightful picture. The ground when we were there was covered with a thin layer of snow at close to freezing point, while the spring water itself gushed out at 90°C.

It was obviously out of the question to bathe in a spring this hot. We began to regret that we had not taken our chance at the earlier campsite. Although there was hot water on tap in our lodgings, it didn't seem to offer quite the same experience as a natural hot spring. But then our guide, a mysterious grin on his face, told us to bring a change of clothing and follow

him. The mystery was unveiled when we reached another waterfall not far from camp. The fall was about ten metres high and eight wide and it was warm, just the right temperature. There was already another group of tourists there. We joined them on the rocks and under the fall and let the water soothe away the aches and pains from our long ride. We slept soundly that night.

Next morning we continued towards the third camp, which was only 4.4 kilometres away. However, since the path was all uphill, the guide said we would reach it faster on foot. In any case the snow-covered path might be too slippery for the horses, so it would be safer to walk.

Now only conifers grew sparsely on both sides of the path. Covered with snow as they were, we felt as if Christmas had come early. The valley narrowed as we advanced, presenting an ocean of white. Everything was cold and deadly still. We suddenly spied what looked like takin, sturdily built creatures something like a mountain goat, clambering at their ease on the cliff-face.

A further two kilometres' walk brought us to a frozen lake. Below a thin coat of ice emerald waters flowed; withered reeds dotted the surface here and there. This place is called Shuihaizi, and it is the site of an ancient moraine or till lake. In the spring its banks are splendid with wild grasses and flowers and one can often find rare plants for use in medicine such as the Chinese caterpillar fungus and the fritillary. Beside the lake a small pavilion invites you to rest and enjoy the view. Surrounded by snowy mountains in this fairytale landscape, we forgot we still had some way to go. Thus a trip which normally takes two hours took us a full five!

Gilded by the Sun

Our first sight on reaching camp three at an altitude of 2,800 metres was a group of triangular wooden huts, their orange-red vivid against the white background. We never expected to find European-style mountain chalets in such a remote part of China. This was where we were to stay.

At seven o'clock the next morning we were woken by our excited guide. It was apparently a perfect day for the 'radiant sun shining on the golden mountain', a rare sight on Mount

The hardy local ponies are the best way to penetrate Hailuogou (1). The path, along which one might see takin (2, by Huang Yunsheng), leads past steaming waterfalls (3, by Lin Yiping) to the cheerful chalets at the third campsite (4) (1 and 4 by Wu Jian).



Gongga. The local people say that Gongga, as a goddess, does not like her mysteries to be unveiled and generally shrouds herself coyly in the mists.

We hurriedly washed and dashed out to find many other visitors already assembled in an open space nearby. We picked a position from where we would have a clear view and waited quietly, gazing at the silvery peak outlined against the deepening blue of the sky. Fifteen minutes passed like this. Then, suddenly, the peak turned red under the touch of the dawn rays and within seconds the whole mountain was awash with sunlight. The clouds floating over the peak also reflected the bright red rays and even the forests in the valley below us were painted with a rosy purple. We held our collective breath as we watched this strikingly beautiful sunrise. It was only when the sun moved on to illuminate the glacier in the ravine at the mountain's foot that we were reminded that we still had to explore Hailuogou's glacier heart, now only a short way further up the valley.

The Hailuogou Glacier

After we had walked for two hours through the forest, the world opened up again in front of us as we entered a wide clearing. Looking down from a sort of terrace, we saw the greyish-white glacier filling the bottom of the ravine with firs on both sides. However, the part of the glacier in front of us which penetrated six kilometres into the forest was only the tip of the giant river of ice. The Hailuogou Glacier is 14.7 kilometres long and covers an area of sixteen square kilometres.

We hurried down the slope to the glacier. We touched it, and found that the ice was rock-hard beneath the thin topcoat of snow. We were reminded yet again by our guide to be extremely careful, especially when we reached the great icefall and the seracs. If we fell into a crevasse, no-one would be able to save us. However, in our excitement at experiencing a real glacier so close to, we forgot all our guide's warnings once we were on it. Some of us moved too fast and lost our balance, rolling around on the slippery surface. Suddenly there was a yell: one of our number had tumbled and fallen full-length on the edge of a frozen pond. Luckily, the surface ice held under his weight.

Hailuogou is a wonderful place to view a glacier, that's for sure. Although we were surrounded by snow and ice, we did not feel cold. I had a thermometer with me to check the temperature. It was surprisingly mild at 5°C. Also, since Hailuogou is only 2,800 metres above sea-level, there is no risk of altitude

sickness. We saw people of all ages visiting the glacier park.

On climbing the glacier tongue, we discovered that the surface was pitted with pebbles and gravel. Our guide told us that the ice is continually being melted during the day by the warmth of the sun, so that the pebbles and other detritus gradually sink in until they

are deposited. This continual melting and refreezing is also what makes the glacier surface so slippery. As we moved forward cautiously, we could hear the sound of running water. Listening more carefully, we found that the noise was coming from beneath the ten-metre-thick layer of ice below our feet. Melt water from the glacier seeps down through the

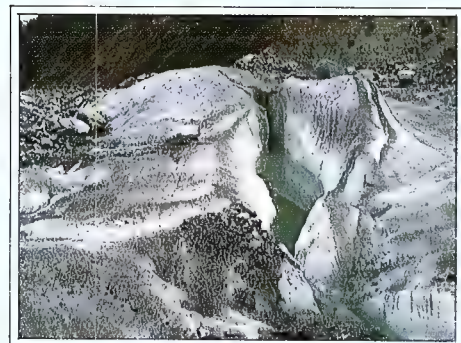


crevasses and between the ice strata, eventually forming a powerful torrent below the glacier.

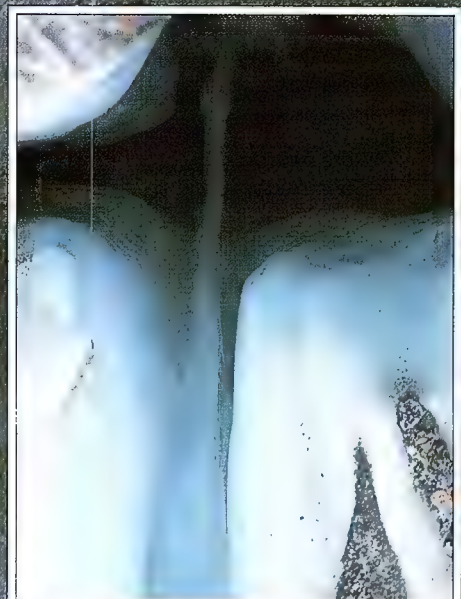
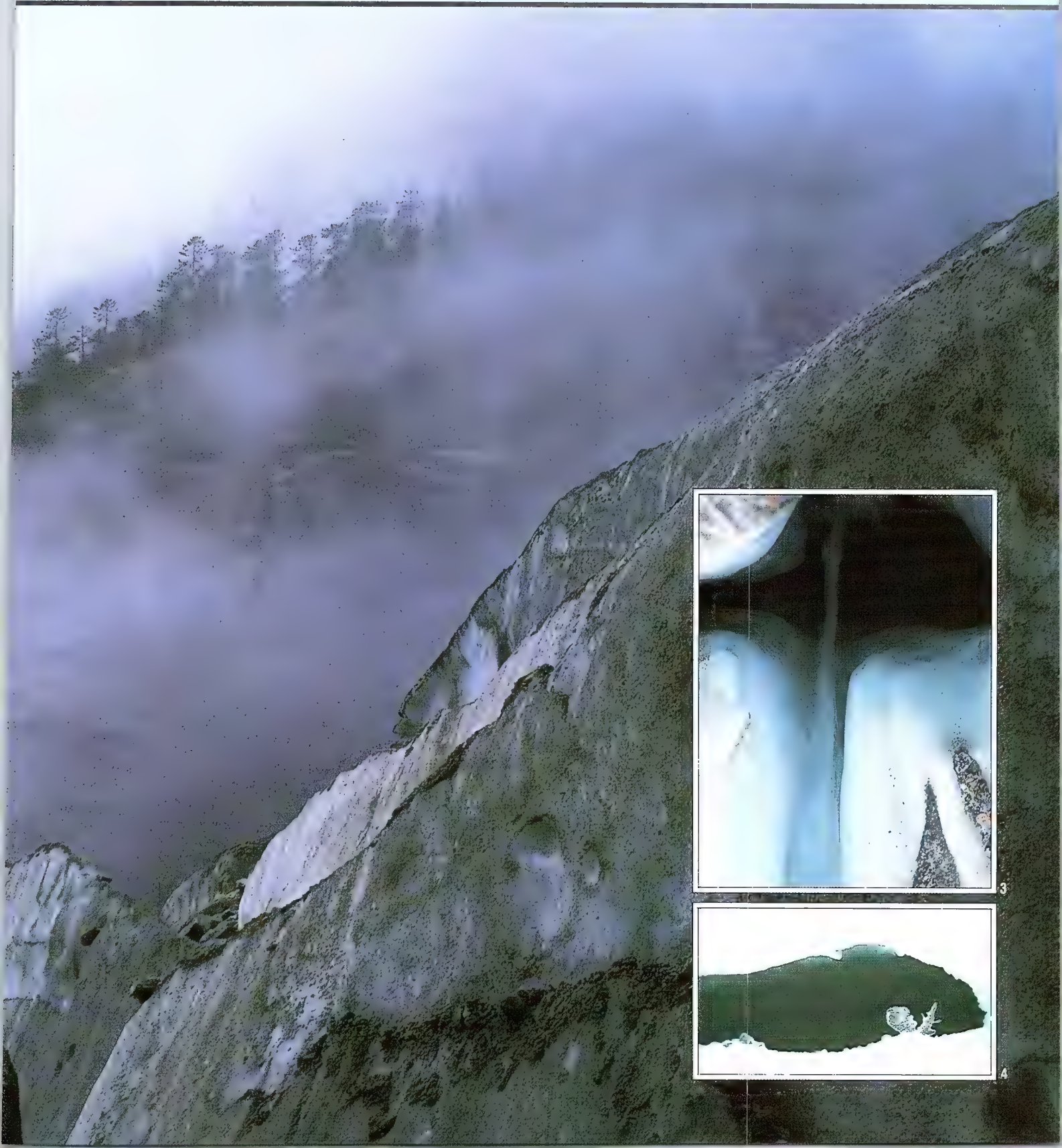
The surface might be slippery, but it's certainly not flat and mirror-like. On the contrary, there are amazing ice sculptures everywhere — giant mushrooms, beasts and human figures — fashioned by nature's hand. Reflecting the clear blue sky, small pools are

scattered on the icy surface like so many sparkling sapphires.

The morning mists over the glacier (1, by Chen Donglin) rise to reveal a variety of icy features: glacier ponds (2), crystal-like caverns (3) and bottomless crevasses (4) (last three by Lin Yiping).



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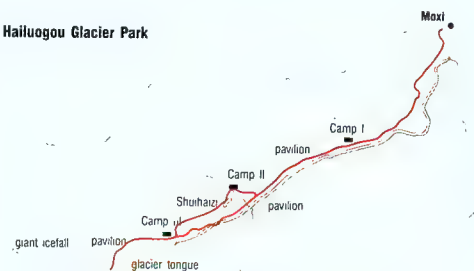


3



4

Hailuoguo Glacier Park



After walking about a kilometre, we came to a natural ice cavern ten metres high and eight metres wide. We entered in single file, each placing his or her hands on the shoulders of the person in front. Once inside, we felt that we were in a crystal palace with transparent walls. The sun shining in through the entrance was



refracted through the inner walls of the cavern as a soft glow. Inverted ice cones of a crystalline blue hung like stalactites from the roof. Water dripped off the icicles with a silvery splash. Further back in the cavern, more water flowed from the roof, probably filtering through from the glacier above.

Avalanche!

Yet another kilometre and the surface of the glacier rose into a 'forest' of seracs, pillar-like mounds of ice. We had to climb up and down the enormous pinnacles as we proceeded and all of us were extra careful now. From the top of the mounds we were able to see the

magnificent spectacle of the great icefall up ahead. This, China's largest, is 1,100 metres wide and 1,080 metres long. It drops vertically from an altitude of 4,500 metres to form a huge wall of ice, flashing silver under the sun's rays.

All of a sudden an avalanche took place right in front of our eyes. We heard a dull, booming sound like thunder and snow and ice sprayed abruptly into the air. A huge, irregular chunk of ice had broken away from the ice wall and fallen from a height of a thousand metres. Although we were some distance off, we were still quite shaken by the sight. Our guide stated calmly that this was only a small avalanche. He told us that spring and autumn were the main avalanche seasons in Hailuogou. A really big avalanche might last for more than ten minutes and displace millions of cubic metres of ice. The thought alone was terrifying....

Above the icefall, in a basin above the snow-line, you can see the area of firn — perpetual snow — which feeds the glacier. Known as the Ice Drop Basin, it is no place for the casual visitor. It is best left to experienced climbers craving adventure and challenge ... and properly equipped for the task.

Translated by Ursula Yeung

Risky fun among the seracs (3, by Ge Jialin) in a world of sculptured formations (1) and mirror-smooth surfaces (2) (1 and 2 by Jin Changping). In the icefall, spring and autumn are the main avalanche seasons (4, by Lin Qiang).



Shaanxi Folk Papercuts

Rustic simplicity typifies the character of the inhabitants of the loess plateau. And this is vigorously highlighted in the papercuts pasted on walls, doors, windows and furnishings in cave-dwellings in the countryside of Xunyi County, Shaanxi Province.

Buddhas in red and green, odd-looking little creatures, bright-coloured flowers and plants, and even crops and vegetables in the form of papercuts fill the simple residential caves, turning them into a dazzling world.

The images created are original and entirely unrestrained, far different from the shapes on which they are based. The artist renders her fondest whims in the pictures, as do artless children. Were it not for the mature and experienced skill evident in the handling of the scissors, one would have thought that these papercuts had sprung from the hands of children.

Photos by Liu Shizhen
Text by Chan Yat Nin

In each of two little pavilions under a pomegranate tree laden with fruit stands a young girl who is manipulating a pair of scissors and cutting out paper flowers and plants. More scissors seen hanging on the walls suggest that the girls are dexterous papercut artists. This picture, made by the paste-on technique, is the very portrait of the artist's own life.

The overall theme of this picture is the life of farmers living in cave-dwellings on the loess plateau. The *suona* players are apparently playing a lively tune, attracting even the butterflies. So enthralled by the music are a cat and a rat that they are squatting peacefully side by side under the table. It is difficult to ascertain the sex of the *suona* players because of their exaggerated features and rich attire, but obviously electric light bulbs play a major role in the cave-dwellers' lives! Exaggerated though they are, these images are naive and charming, embodying to a certain extent the rustic flavour of the loess plateau.

This trunk covered with papercuts is a distinctive example of the use of this art form. Eleven of the twelve sides of the trunk are pasted with papercuts: auspicious patterns, decorative Chinese characters meaning longevity, flying birds, swimming fish, shrimps and crabs, and skipping kittens. In the centre of the cover is a large frog. The distribution and composition of the papercuts seem to have no logical connection and this very randomness underlines the artist's free and intense desire to pursue beauty.







Three gorgeously dressed little girls with hair plaited in different ways look as if they are going to school, as revealed by the abacus and the multicoloured ink bottle. What interests us is that these are children as seen through the eyes of children. They put on as many beautiful things as they can, and smear on their faces any colour they find attractive. The uninhibited quality reveals to us the artist's childlike heart.

The decorative patterns and figures pieced together on the coloured paper box are varied and numerous, but give one a feeling of rhythm. Their green and blue against the scarlet background dazzle one's eyes. The box is probably of the kind used by villagers as a container for gifts, the strong tints perfectly reflecting the jubilant atmosphere. The two little flowers on one side of the box cover turn out to be a pair of buttons.



The symmetrically pasted picture above is particularly unusual. A spider and a frog are accompanied by colourful birds, a shrimp and a lizard. Below these is a phoenix with her young ones. The meticulously cut feathers of the mother bird are in pastel shades, while the enormous frog is splendidly multi-coloured.



This bizarre tree has a black trunk and black branches, all covered with yellow butterflies and tiny flowers which look like sparkling fluorescent lights. Such a tree has sprung straight from the imagination of a 68-year-old woman. Together with everyday things such as carrots, cabbages, birds and flowers, she has created a strange and wonderful universe combining the fairy-tale world with real life.

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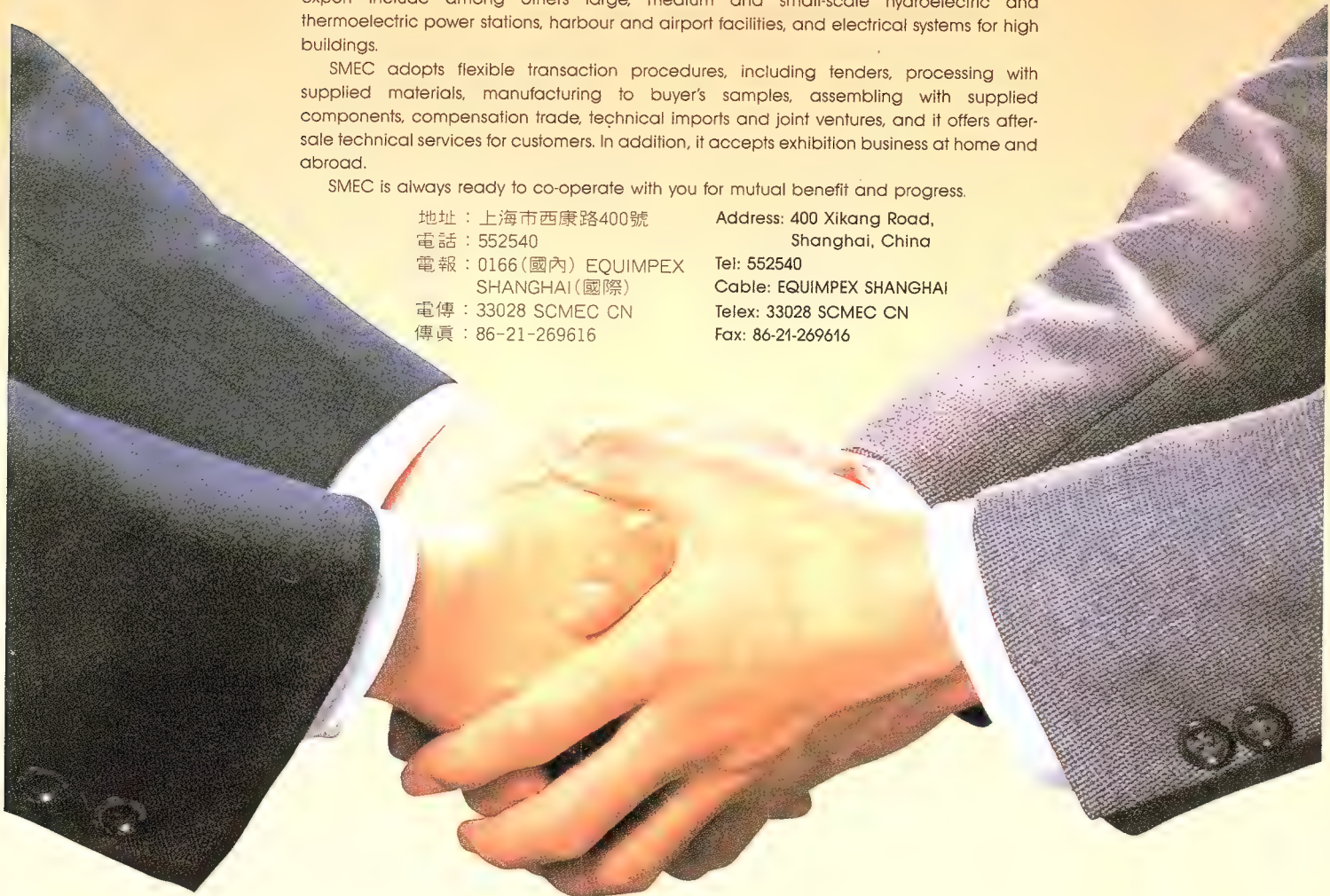
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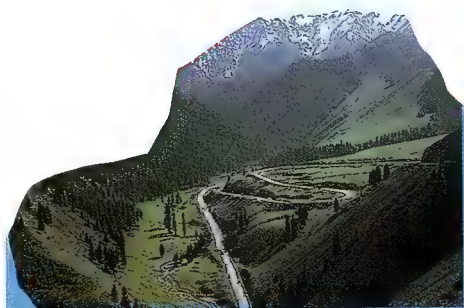




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BEIJING 慕隆 POLO SHOP



The Beijing Marco Polo Shop, a retail department of the Beijing Arts & Crafts Imp. & Exp. Corporation, boasts a history of more than fifty years and has long enjoyed a good reputation both at home and abroad.

As is well known, Marco Polo (1254-1324) was a famous Italian traveller and adventurer who in 1271 undertook a long and difficult journey to China, where he stayed for seventeen years. As he was highly regarded by the Yuan emperor Shizu (Kublai Khan), he was put in an important position which enabled him to travel throughout the country. After his return to Venice, he completed his world-renowned report *The Travels*, which eventually widened the European field of vision and contributed greatly to Sino-Western contacts. It is therefore understandable that the Chinese people of later generations were pleased to name shops 'Marco Polo' in commemoration of the friendly Venetian traveller.

As early as the 1930s, the Beijing Marco Polo Shop distinguished itself by its high-grade arts and crafts, jewellery and carpets. On sale there is a wide variety of traditional Chinese

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A Temple Festival on the Grassland

PHOTOS BY BAI JUNJIANG • TEXT BY HE DEQUAN

Our car moved slowly forward over the Hulun Buir Grassland in Inner Mongolia. Slowly, because we found ourselves part of a swaying, jolting procession of wildly assorted conveyances — covered ox-carts, horses, as well as motorcycles and more customary vehicles. Progress was so snail-like that, in the end, we abandoned the car and took to our feet. The general air of confused excitement was compounded by the different languages flying around and the mix of nationalities ... Tungusic-speaking Ewenkis, Mongolian-speaking Buryat Mongols, Mongolians and Daur, Mandarin-speaking Han Chinese ... just some of the local residents who were making their way out to the Xinhen Grassland for its temple festival.



Our point of departure had been the city of Hailar, high in the northeast of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, close to Manzhouli and the border with the USSR. A twenty-minute drive south of the city along the River Yimin had brought us to the Ewenki Autonomous Banner (an administrative unit something like a county), where we had attached ourselves to this cheerful, motley throng which could almost have been taken for a bunch of nomads on the move. It was August — early autumn by local reckoning in an area where the average annual temperature hovers around freezing point.

The common goal for pilgrims and curious sightseers alike was the Xinhen Temple out on the grassland. Constructed in 1928 with funds donated by the local herdsmen, the temple was badly damaged in the 1960s. The particular interest of the present occasion was that the temple was about to hold its first festival since its recent reconstruction. It was apparently no beauty, but it had always been held in high regard locally.

Eventually reaching our destination, we were relieved to find that we had missed nothing of importance — in fact the lamas, clad in traditional robes, were still making final preparations.

Lamaism, or Tibetan Buddhism, is believed to have been introduced into Mongolia as early as the thirteenth century. However, it only really began to spread into this particular area during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), especially under the emperor Qianlong, when large numbers of Tibetan and Mongolian lamas were encouraged to move into the grassland. For around eighty years from 1751 over thirty monasteries were constructed (the first following the Tibetan model). These were large complexes, one of them said to have housed over a thousand monks and lamas.

At that time the sparse local population was mainly composed of Ewenkis and Buryats from Siberia. Their original lands had long been a bone of contention but had been incorporated into Russian territory during the reign of the Qing emperor Kangxi as a result of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689. This fixed the boundary between the two countries at this point as the River Ergun, one of the tributaries of the Heilongjiang. Over the next thirty years or so the Buryats and Ewenkis filtered down slowly into China, where they were given permission to settle.

Most of the Siberian tribes and especially the Buryats traditionally practised shamanism, a form of religious belief centred on a shaman, a priest-like figure with psychic powers who acts as an intermediary between the everyday and spirit worlds



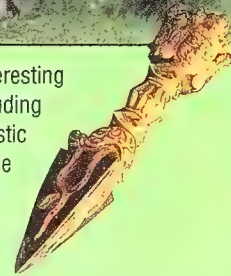
— magic, sorcery and ecstatic trances playing an important role. The interesting thing is that, as Lamaism is itself an amalgamation of many elements, including Bön, the earlier indigenous religion of Tibet which has shamanistic and animistic overtones of its own, and Tantric practices which emphasize the importance of magic and ritual, it was easily accepted by these peoples of the northeast.

My thoughts were interrupted by a long-drawn-out droning sound which seemed to herald some sort of activity. Spotting a flight of stairs by the side of the temple, I climbed up to the roof where I came face to face with a couple of lamas blowing ritual conches. Below, a line of pilgrims wound step by step towards the entrance. At last the festival was underway!

I clambered back down to get a better look. The herdsmen held lamps and offerings which occasionally included paper money. They chanted, bowed and prostrated their way into the inner sanctum where the lamas accepted their donations and arranged them neatly on tables. Afterwards the devout emerged from the building and circled it in single file, praying and invoking blessings.

Meanwhile, typical of any grassland get-together, those who had come purely for social reasons and those who had already fulfilled their religious obligations relaxed with their families in front of the temple, enjoying the food and drink they had brought with them. These are colourful people who preserve a great deal of their traditions. Many of the Buryats are now settled rather than nomadic, but they are still herders of sheep and cattle. The Ewenkis, originally hunters and forest trappers, now breed reindeer and David's deer (*Elaphurus davidianus*) on a semi-nomadic basis. But, like people anywhere, they are more than ready to make the most of any break in their everyday routine and enjoy a special outing such as this.

Translated by M.K.



Chu Brocade — A New Hunan Handicraft

PHOTOS BY ZHU XI
TEXT BY LI XIANGSHU

Walking into the special handicrafts workshop at the Hunan Embroidery Institute in Hunan Province, you hear the sound of machines as girls of the Tujia tribe demonstrate how they make Chu brocade with their nimble fingers. Examples of their work hang all around.

This is a recently created handicraft which has assimilated the famous brocade work of the Tujia tribe. Tujia brocade, an ancient craft, is noted for its bright and contrasting colours. Apart from aspects



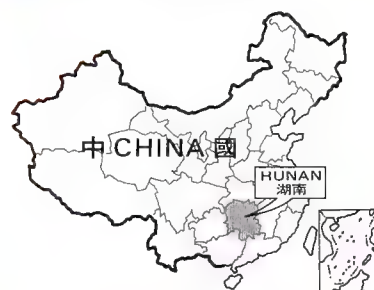
of local culture, its themes are usually taken from everyday life: plants such as rattan and leek, flowers such as bauhinia and peony, various animals, the sun, the moon, clouds at sunset, rainbows, as well as prosaic articles of furniture, give this popular handicraft a character all its own.

Chu brocade has adopted this traditional style, but it also incorporates various other techniques such as embroidery, cross-stitch, patchwork and inlay work.

Here we show two types of Chu brocade with quite a distinctive character. One of them portrays painted facial masks from traditional Chinese opera with a variety of exaggerated expressions. The masks are very vivid because they are worked in such a way as to reveal the colours of the warp (the longitudinal threads).

The other type illustrated consists of *taotie* patterns used to adorn such articles as cushions, pillowcases, purses and spectacle cases (a *taotie* is a gluttonous mythical creature with a huge belly often seen on bronze and other vessels). The patterns are produced by a technique adapted from the tribespeoples' 'coil work' in which the designs are formed by golden thread coiled over the surface of the article. In this case, the designs are made with thick cord instead of thread.

Translated by Nicole Lee



A Jewel in an Unlikely Setting

Mei Fei Palace in Putian County

PHOTOS BY MA YAOJUN
ARTICLE BY YUAN YUE

Jiangdong Village is a simple, quiet little place in Putian County, Fujian. There is no spectacular modern architecture there and the villagers lead a peaceful farming life. However, this ordinary village contains an extraordinary building — Mei Fei Palace — in honour of an exceptional lady.

* * *

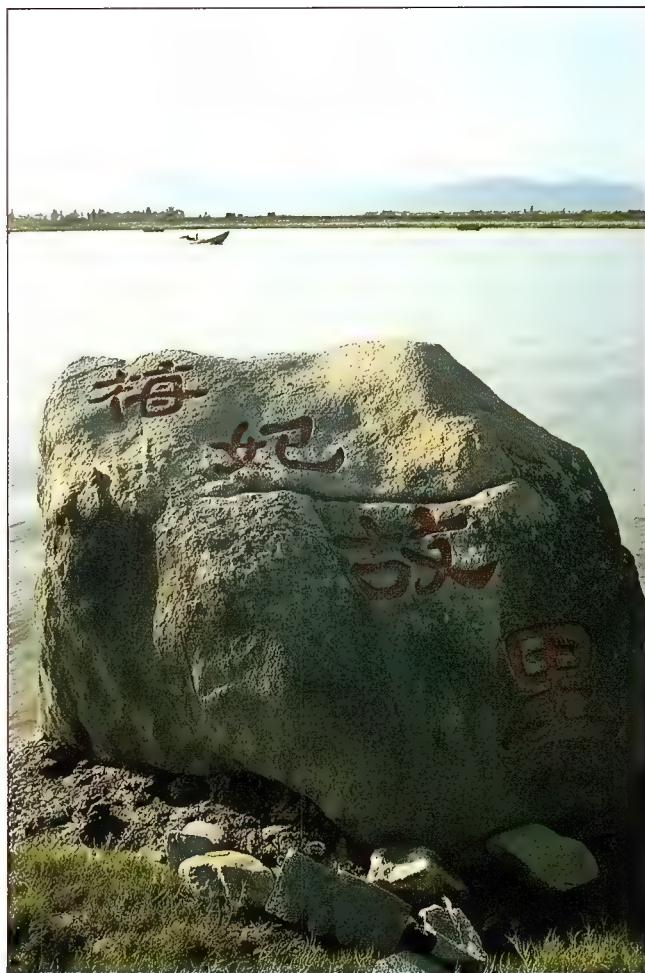
Mei Fei, as she is known to posterity, was born in Jiangdong in the eighth century — during the Tang dynasty — to a family which had been practising medicine for generations. She was a very bright child. She could memorize and recite from one of the four most famous Chinese classics — *Shi Jing* (The Book of Songs) — by the age of nine. In addition, she was gentle, modest and exceptionally beautiful. Herding some ducks at the seashore near the village one day, she was spotted by a government official sent out by the emperor to search for lovely young ladies to keep the latter company in his palace, and she was later taken to the capital of Chang'an (the present-day Xi'an).

Mei Fei won the affection of Emperor Xuanzong soon after she arrived in the capital and, because of her love for plum flowers, it was not long before plum trees were planted everywhere in the palace. When they blossomed, she would sit beneath them in admiration and was even inspired by their beauty to write poems. So fond of plum blossoms was she that Xuanzong gave her the nickname Mei Jing (Plum Fairy) and even bestowed upon her the official title Mei Fei (Mei — plum, Fei — imperial concubine).

However, the good times did not last. Yang Yuehuan, a very well-known woman in Chinese history, arrived at the palace in A.D. 745 and became Xuanzong's favourite mistress, taking the name Yang Guifei. The emperor lost interest in his other concubines, including Mei Fei, who was banished from court and forced to live out the rest of her days in solitude.

The story of this historical personage from their own village touched the hearts of the elders of Jiangdong at some stage, and they decided to build a palace in her honour. The villagers still show their respect by paying homage to her today.

Although it is unclear when it was first constructed, the Mei Fei Palace in Jiangdong was rebuilt in the sixteenth or seventeenth



1



2



3



4



5

A rock inscribed 'Home Town of Mei Fei' reminds passers-by of a thousand-year-old romantic tragedy (1), while inside the palace gilded signboards add an imperial touch (2). With huge lanterns in the hall (4) and delicately-patterned brackets (3), the palace somewhat resembles a southern Chinese temple (5).

century during the Ming dynasty, and has been renovated several times since. Its external appearance is not very grand, but it hides some magnificent features not found in ordinary village houses. It is a showcase for the clever design and excellent craftsmanship of its builders.

* * *

As I approached the palace, I noted the interesting shrine tucked in under the eaves beside the entrance to the building. The upward-curving 'roof' looked like a pair of wings and sheltered a series of colourful paintings of natural landscapes which had obviously sprung from the hands of folk artists.

I walked up the steps and entered the building. The inner wall beside the entrance was even more attractive. It held an embossed painting with a sort of round 'window' in the centre, which took up nearly half the total area. Looking into the mock window, I saw graceful pavilions amidst artificial hills and landscapes in a neat and harmonious scene.

The main hall was located at the end of a long corridor leading right through from the entrance. Several huge lanterns hung from the main beam under the roof and railings were set in front of the hall. I stepped over the threshold and found myself in a completely different atmosphere. Instead of the plain and unadorned look of the outside of the building, the main hall bore touches of true palatial splendour.

This hall formed the essence of the whole complex. All the beams and rafters were covered with patterns. Signboards painted in gold hung on the beams supporting the roof, paid for by donations from the village elders of Jiangdong over the years to show their admiration for Mei Fei.

In the middle of the hall stood a huge altar carved from wood. Its human figures, trees, flowers and birds were carefully executed, although they looked a little bit rustic. I was told that the villagers considered the contents of the Mei Fei Palace priceless treasures and that they had done their utmost to protect them at various times of turmoil.

The altar held a statue of Mei Fei attended by two maids with long-handled fans. The scene certainly looked like the way in which royal figures should be treated, but it seemed to me that a few more sprays of plum blossom would have made a more appropriate background for Mei Fei than the pair of dragons which coiled up the wall behind her.

Translated by Ursula Yeung



Gilding on the elaborate wooden altar (1), the statue of Mei Fei (2), and the many carved signboards (4) reflect the honour in which the former imperial concubine is held. The shrine at the palace entrance is unique in design (3).



2



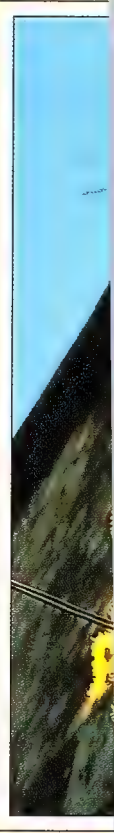
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4

Where the Chrysanthemum is King

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY WONG CHUNG FAI





Last November, during the flowering season for chrysanthemums, I happened to be in Guangdong Province. A friend told me that Xiaolan, in the south near Zhongshan, is famous as the 'home of chrysanthemums'. He joked that, after a visit, I might smell as good as the flowers by the time I returned. So off I went...

As you approach Xiaolan by car, the borders of the road are bright with grass and flowers, the latter mainly chrysanthemums. Rows of simple two-storeyed brick dwellings line the streets of the town, a few plastered and whitewashed houses among them. Chrysanthemums grow freely in the gardens; their light fragrance fills the air. With the murmur of the brook at the far end of town, Xiaolan seemed to me a place of tranquillity and a certain elegance.

Strolling through the small alleyways, I was struck by the sight of chrysanthemums everywhere. People like to adorn their doorsteps and verandas with a few pots of the plants. One family had even placed a pot in the fork of a tall banyan, training it over a wooden frame. The blossoms poured down from the tree like a bridal bouquet. I frequently encountered girls with a couple of chrysanthemums in their hands or pinned to their blouses. It seems that Xiaolan people have to have these flowers around them.

I gradually came to realize why I had not seen any cut-flower stalls in the town. When every family grows its own flowers, who needs to buy? The fact is that Xiaolan people grow chrysanthemums for their own pleasure, although you do see big pots of fancy varieties on sale in the markets and in the specialized nurseries.

Following the river, I passed the courtyard of a flower-grower. The master of the house was playing there with a small child, one of his grandchildren, and invited me in for a chat. Happily smoking away at his bamboo pipe, the elderly gentleman talked to me about his flowers: 'Hold one in your hand for a few moments and the fragrance will remain with you for ages', he said. He showed me a rare species of chrysanthemum which has petals as red as blood, dark, gleaming foliage and very sturdy stems. The special thing about this variety is that when it withers, the petals do not fall and the head remains intact — an important consideration when drying flower-heads.

My host showed me the many pots of chrysanthemums he had inside. I could see that these plants had been carefully tended, each individual flower tenderly supported on a bamboo stick. The only variety I recognized however was one with curled-up petals. The grower told me that some chrysanthemum lovers even select antique flower pots for rare species of chrysanthemum, the better to show off the matchless beauty of the blooms.

The Legendary Background

From this gentleman I also learned that, for Xiaolan residents, their chrysanthemum-growing is a way for them to express their feelings for their hometown and commemorate their ancestors' reasons for settling here.

Legend has it that, more than seven hundred years ago, a concubine of Emperor Duzong (reign dates 1265-1274) of the Southern Song dynasty ran away from court. The emperor rampaged all over the place in his search to find her and bring her back, killing

many people in his rage. Seeking refuge, many of his subjects fled south. It was autumn. Attracted by the chrysanthemums which grew wild all around the countryside in the vicinity of what is now Xiaolan, many stayed and made their homes there. Later they transplanted the wild flowers and cultivated them in gardens and nurseries. This is how the people of Xiaolan explain their special attachment to the chrysanthemum.

In fact, most of today's chrysanthemum varieties are descended from plants native to China. These members of the daisy family have been cultivated in China for over a thousand years. In the Qing dynasty, from around the end of the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, chrysanthemum appreciation clubs were in vogue. Scholars would gather to admire the blooms; wine would be drunk and poetry inspired. And it is said that a grand chrysanthemum fair was held at every celebration of Xiaolan's founding in the year *jiaxu* (literally, first stem, eleventh branch).

To explain this, we must look at how time was measured in the past under the traditional lunar calendar. Every year was distinguished by a name made up of two characters, the first taken from the ten Heavenly Stems, the second from the twelve Earthly Branches. These stems and branches were also used to mark the days and hours in a complex system. One complete cycle covered sixty years, so in fact the grand chrysanthemum fairs were only held once every sixty years. This rule is still observed today. However, a smaller chrysanthemum exhibition is staged every year in season.

Cooking with Chrysanthemums

Not only do Xiaolan people know how to grow chrysanthemums very successfully, they also know how to employ them for various culinary purposes.

The streetside food stalls there sell chrysanthemum tea made from the dried flower-heads, said to be 'cooling' to the alimentary system. You can also buy chrysanthemum-stuffed dumplings in soup, as well as bottles of chrysanthemum wine which make good souvenirs. But for me the most unforgettable experience was the 'chrysanthemum hotpot'.

A local friend had invited me to the home of his relatives. With all the utensils for the hotpot ready on the table, we took our seats around the kerosene stove with happy anticipation. The host brought out plates of freshly made meatballs, pieces of fish, dumplings ... but no vegetables. When the soup was ready and all these ingredients had been added to the pot, two large dishes of well-washed fresh chrysanthemum petals were served. Our host told me: 'Chrysanthemum petals from elsewhere taste bitter. Only the *huangliangeng* grown in Xiaolan is sweet and really suitable for eating with hotpots and snake soup.' Without more ado, he picked up some chrysanthemum petals with his chopsticks, submerged them in the pot of boiling soup for a moment, then ate them with enjoyment. I followed his example. The petals were indeed sweet, with a surprisingly crisp, firm texture.

As a finishing touch, I tried a cup of the local chrysanthemum wine. Based on rice wine brewed with dried chrysanthemum flowers, it is not very strong, but the fragrance makes for a drink with a difference.



Translated by Annette Lee



Photo by Liu Pit Mui



Photo by Liu Pit Mui

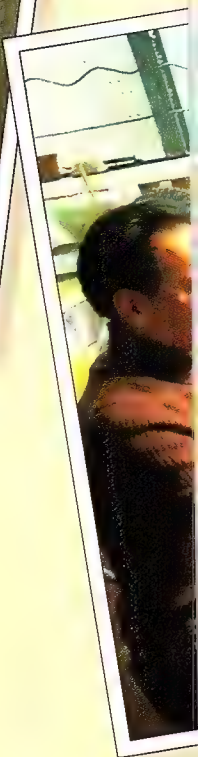


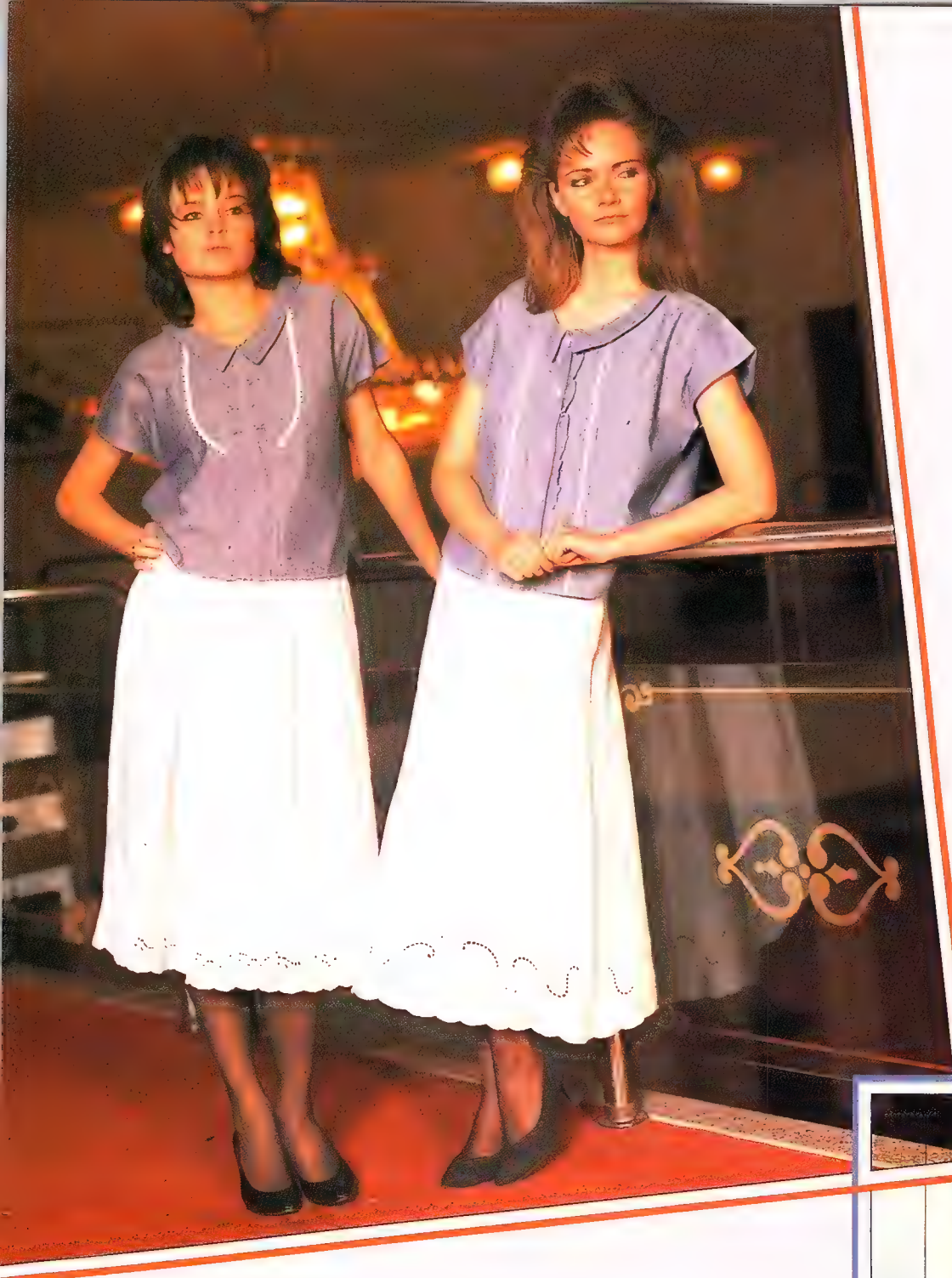


Photo by Liu Pit Mui



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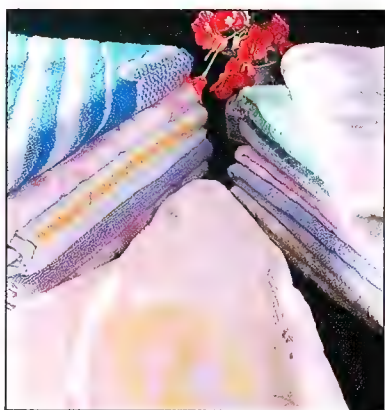
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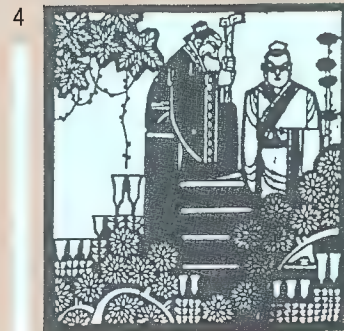
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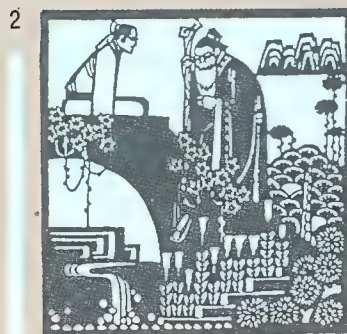
A Young Man Worth Teaching

Illustrations by Luo Feng
Text by Jin Wenming

This proverb (*Ru Zi Ke Jiao*) is taken from *Shi Ji* (Records of the Historian) compiled by the Han historian Sima Qian (c. 145-90 B.C.). In a fine mixture of legend and historical fact, its hero is Zhang Liang (?-186 B.C.), a young noble of the State of Han of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). Huang Shigong, the old man, is probably a legendary figure.



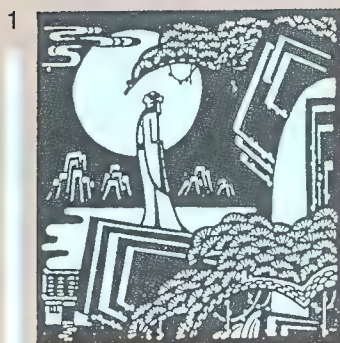
Zhang was rather surprised but, taking pity on the old man, he went down and picked up the shoe.



One day, strolling near the River Yishui, Zhang stopped to rest on a bridge. As he was sitting there an elderly man, very plainly dressed, approached. Just before passing Zhang, he lifted one foot in such a way that his shoe fell off the bridge.



However, when he returned with the shoe, the old man lifted his foot and said, 'Young man, put it on for me!'



After Qin conquered all the other states of the time and unified China in 221 B.C. under the Qin dynasty, Zhang Liang was implicated in a plot to assassinate the emperor Shihuang and fled to Xiapi (present-day Suining in northern Jiangsu, not far west of the Grand Canal).



The old man made no move to retrieve his shoe. Instead, he sat down on the bridge and asked Zhang to fetch it for him.



Flabbergasted, Zhang pretended not to hear him. But the old man repeated his request so, thinking that he might as well finish what he had started, Zhang knelt and eased the shoe on to the old man's foot.



The old man stood up, straightened his robe, and left without a single word of thanks ... just a slight smile. Zhang was shocked by such rudeness.



Five days later, anxious not to be late again, Zhang got up and left his house as soon as he heard the cocks crow. But — as before — the old man was there before him. Zhang hung his head in shame. The old man gave him one more chance.



Bidding the old man a grateful farewell, Zhang hurried home. The book turned out to be a treatise on the art of war written by Jiang Taigong (a legendary figure said to have helped King Wu overthrow the Shang and establish the Zhou dynasty around the eleventh century B.C.). Zhang was overjoyed and set himself to study with zeal.




But after going a few hundred metres the old man turned back and said, 'Young man, it seems that you're worth teaching. Please meet me here at dawn in five days' time.'



This time Zhang didn't even dare close his eyes the night before; he set out to the bridge before midnight. Not long after, he saw the old man approaching in the moonlight.



Zhang was later instrumental in helping Liu Bang — Emperor Gaozu (reign dates 202-195 B.C.) of the Western Han — overthrow the Qin dynasty and defeat his arch-rival Xiang Yu. Zhang became one of the emperor's most trusted ministers. 



On the appointed day Zhang hurried to the bridge at dawn, only to find the old man already there. The latter scolded him quite angrily: 'Young people should take care not to be late for appointments with their elders. Go home now, and come back in another five days.'



The old man was delighted with Zhang and presented him with a complete set of volumes. 'My name is Huang Shigong,' he said. 'Study this book well and you can be a great help to the future emperor.'

Selected from the 'Stories of Chinese Proverbs' series published by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House, Shanghai

The Art of Lai Shaoqi

This July, the Hongkong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture was the venue for a representative exhibition of the works of the respected artist Lai Shaoqi.

Born in Puning County, Guangdong Province, in 1915, after study at the Guangzhou Fine Arts Institute Lai embarked on his artistic career as a print-maker in the 1930s. He was considered one of the pioneers of the modern woodcut movement and received warm praise from none other than Lu Xun (1881-1936), the famous writer and founder of modern Chinese literature, who called Lai 'a young wood-carver with the greatest challenging power'. Lai's woodblock prints even proved useful as propaganda tools against the Japanese invasion. In the 1950s he turned to Chinese painting and calligraphy, learning his techniques — as is customary in China — by copying existing works by old masters before developing his own personal style. Known as an all-rounder, Lai also writes poems and carves seals to complement his paintings in the traditional manner.

He is perhaps best known for his many hundreds of paintings of Mount Huangshan, the mountain of legendary beauty in southern Anhui Province, where he lived for many years. In his search to capture the true spirit of the mountain at all seasons, Lai used to climb it several times a year. Now over seventy, he has returned to live among the gentler landscapes of Guangdong where he continues to strive for new means of expression. Lai holds many honorary and advisory positions in the world of the arts in China, and has exhibited widely.

CHINA TOURISM (CT) had the honour of interviewing Lai Shaoqi during his stay in Hong Kong. He talks here about his development as an artist, his approach to painting, and the pre-occupations of the younger generation of Chinese artists.

CT: Mr Lai, what were your first contacts with Chinese painting?

Lai: I started my studies at the Guangzhou Fine Arts Institute in 1930 and graduated in 1936. I was very much attracted to calligraphy from an early age and I started studying the Qing painter and calligrapher Zheng Banqiao (1693-1765), who belonged to the group known as the 'Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou'. I now consider that to have been ineffectual; I had not had the chance to see any of Zheng's authentic works at that time. After I saw some when I was much older, I didn't think his style was right for me, so I stopped that line of study. Afterwards, I mainly studied Jin Nong (1687-1763), who headed the Yangzhou group. Jin really had talent. I practised *lishu* (official



Photo by Wong Chung Fai

script, an ancient style of calligraphy current in the Han dynasty from 206 B.C. - A.D. 220) and also *xingshu* (running script), modelling myself on Jin. Lines or strokes are most important in learning to paint in the Chinese manner, and Jin's strokes are bold and vigorous.

Now I think that we should learn from the good things in China's past. For an artist, this means he must work from models. In the Qing dynasty they considered this an aim, not just a means to an end, which was wrong. It is only fruitful to undertake model-copying as a means of learning from the past; it is also a sort of creation to reproduce ancient paintings....

The history of Chinese landscape painting goes back over 1,500 years, after the development of figure painting, animal painting and flower-and-plant painting. Many of the Chinese techniques are extraordinary. For example, paintings were traditionally done from the bird's-eye view. Chinese ink-wash paintings give something of the effect of a black-and-white photograph. Even 2,000 years ago, Chinese artists knew about the subtle effects to be achieved with graduated tones of black — there were actually five tones. Any colours added in traditional Chinese landscape painting were very pale; the ink was the main vehicle for expression. And yet the different tones of ink suggest different colours in the landscape.

Another thing about Chinese landscape painting is that its perspective is based on several scattered points, so an immensely long river can be portrayed in its entirety in

a way that would be impossible in the West.

The first necessity is to learn from the past by copying models. In addition, I advocate learning from the West, perhaps Impressionism, then sketching techniques. The principal thing is to sketch from life ... to reflect life; a painter is finished if he or she cannot do that. I do not really accept Futurism, but I can think you can learn from it for practical purposes; for example, the colours and lines of Futurist paintings are worthy of study.

In our history, the artists of the Tang dynasty borrowed techniques from Buddhist art; they learnt from India.... Any good points should be learned, even if they are of minor importance; colours and strokes can be studied. But it is also wrong to study only the West.

CT: Is this viewpoint of yours common in China?

Lai: Not so common. There may be other opinions. Some youngsters only study the West, not China. Even if some artists now study Futurism, they do not learn to sketch. Once they start sketching, they expose their weak points, so they dare not. It is not possible to reflect life at school; you can only learn skills while you are at school.... It is only by going out into society that we can reflect life. The young ones have not had sufficient experience; they have learned from either the West or China, but not both.

I mainly studied landscape painting, but also flower painting after I returned to Guangdong which is in the subtropics where flowers bloom gloriously. For flower painting, I studied Chen Laolian, the greatest painter of the sixteenth century. Zhang Daqian (1899-1983) also learned much from him.

CT: What are the steps in doing a painting? Take painting Mount Huangshan as an example. Should one first visit the actual place?

Lai: First copy models, and then visit Huangshan. We cannot shift perspective with Western painting, but we can with Chinese painting. I must have at least three perspectives in one painting. (He uses a painting to illustrate his point.) There are three viewpoints in a Chinese painting — level, high and deep. In a situation such as painting Huangshan, it is best to do it at home, with the whole of the mountain in your mind's eye. Western painting is based on the mechanical theory of the camera, which cannot fit Huangshan into one single photograph — the background is out of focus, while the foreground is too big. Only a Chinese landscape painting can do this. It is possible to fit scenery over an area of thirty li into a single painting, as long as it is comfortable

to look at and there is no confusion. It is very difficult to find one particular spot at Huangshan from which to do a painting. Huangshan is Huangshan; we must discover and reveal its most typical aspects. Once we have an overview of Huangshan, we can paint creatively.

CT: What is the life of a Chinese artist like at present?

Lai: The youngsters can sell their paintings. I can sell mine too, but I am not obliged to do so because the government provides for me. I have a secretary, a car and a mansion at my disposal. I do however need money to arrange exhibitions because the government does not budget for them. I have to do research and pay for it; picture frames also cost a lot to make. An exhibition costs more than ten thousand yuan.

This is a problem for young painters and so the most important issue at present is to reform exhibitions. Exhibitions are staged on a large scale, but only one or two a year. So exhibitions should be small in scale: two or three painters at a time, each exhibiting twenty or thirty pieces of work. The next point is to let painters with similar styles do exhibitions together. We face a very difficult situation now: young painters get almost no chance to take part in an exhibition. Even established older painters have difficulty in getting their new work displayed. Generally, only one to two hundred pieces are selected for an exhibition. And there are too many artists. I think we should 'let all flowers bloom'. But how can we do it without the money?

We are currently experimenting with guesthouses and hotels. This has been very successful and we are very happy about it as it helps to publicize artists and their works. Now painters have solved their exhibition problems and hotels have solved their problems with paintings. Before, there were no paintings in hotels, or only very poor ones ... hotel management put blind faith in so-called experts.

CT: Overseas artists sell their work at exhibitions to finance themselves. What's the situation in China?

Lai: We can also sell our work at exhibitions in China. We can exhibit pieces in hotels, and we can also sell if anybody approaches us. I am the senior artistic advisor for the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. They are making preparations for a new hotel. There will be galleries, and all the rooms will be hung with paintings which will be available for sale. This will be good for both sides.



*After the Flowers of Chen Laolian
Ink with colour (1987)*

CT: Is it because of the lack of exhibition facilities that this is not more common?

Lai: No, the problem is more psychological. Artists think that it is a bit demeaning to exhibit their work in hotels. We are taking the lead in this.

CT: What kind of followers do you have now?

Lai: I do not have any followers. I have taught print-making to a group of students, but my prints are not very good now. To make prints, I must carve and then print them. At my age, it takes me several months to make one. I might as well paint, as I can do a lot more in a few months, enough for an exhibition....

CT: What kind of paper do you use for big paintings? What are your usual themes?

Lai: I mainly do Mount Huangshan. I lived in Anhui for twenty-six years and I have a pretty good idea of Huangshan because of my frequent visits. I also like to paint Mount Jiuhua. My biggest paintings measure 1.6 *zhang* (a unit of length that equals 3.3 metres, the greatest size of a sheet of paper). Generally, my paintings are 1.2 *zhang*. I have painted more than thirty big pieces. The one at the Hongkong Bank is 1.6 *zhang*. There are others at the Dongfang Hotel in Guangzhou and the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. There are also two 1.6 *zhang* pieces that form one huge painting hung in a guesthouse in Anhui.

CT: Is it true that there are more difficulties involved in creating large pieces of work?

Lai: Not really. I use big brushes when I do large paintings and I know fairly well what I am doing. And you are much freer when you paint without looking at the scenery. I paint

Huangshan from experience and change only a few things here and there after the whole painting is done; no big alterations can be done once it is finished. To paint a big painting, I have to lay it on the floor. Brushes must not be too big for doing lines, but they certainly can be for applying colour. Or one can use a roll of cloth.

CT: Do you prefer big paintings?

Lai: As far as landscape painting is concerned, the bigger, the better. Big paintings look grand in exhibitions, but small paintings are better for reproduction, publication in books and so on.

CT: There were very few big paintings in the past.

Lai: Big paintings were only found in the imperial palaces. The biggest were not as large as those produced nowadays; they did not have such big sheets of paper and had to join them together to form one painting. Now we use one big single piece of paper.

CT: How about the relationship between painting and poems?


Lai: There is indeed a relationship between Chinese painting and poetry. Poems are a strong point; they lead you to contemplate the painting.

CT: Have you ever written a poem first and then done the painting?

Lai: I do it either way round. I sometimes conceive the poem while I am painting and leave a certain space for it on the paper. There are more characters on some paintings, less on others; this is all well thought through beforehand. Sometimes the poem takes me more time than the painting.

The content of one's work is enriched if an artist who does Chinese paintings also knows how to write poems. So it is said that there is a painting in a poem and vice versa. A painting with a poem is even more expressive.

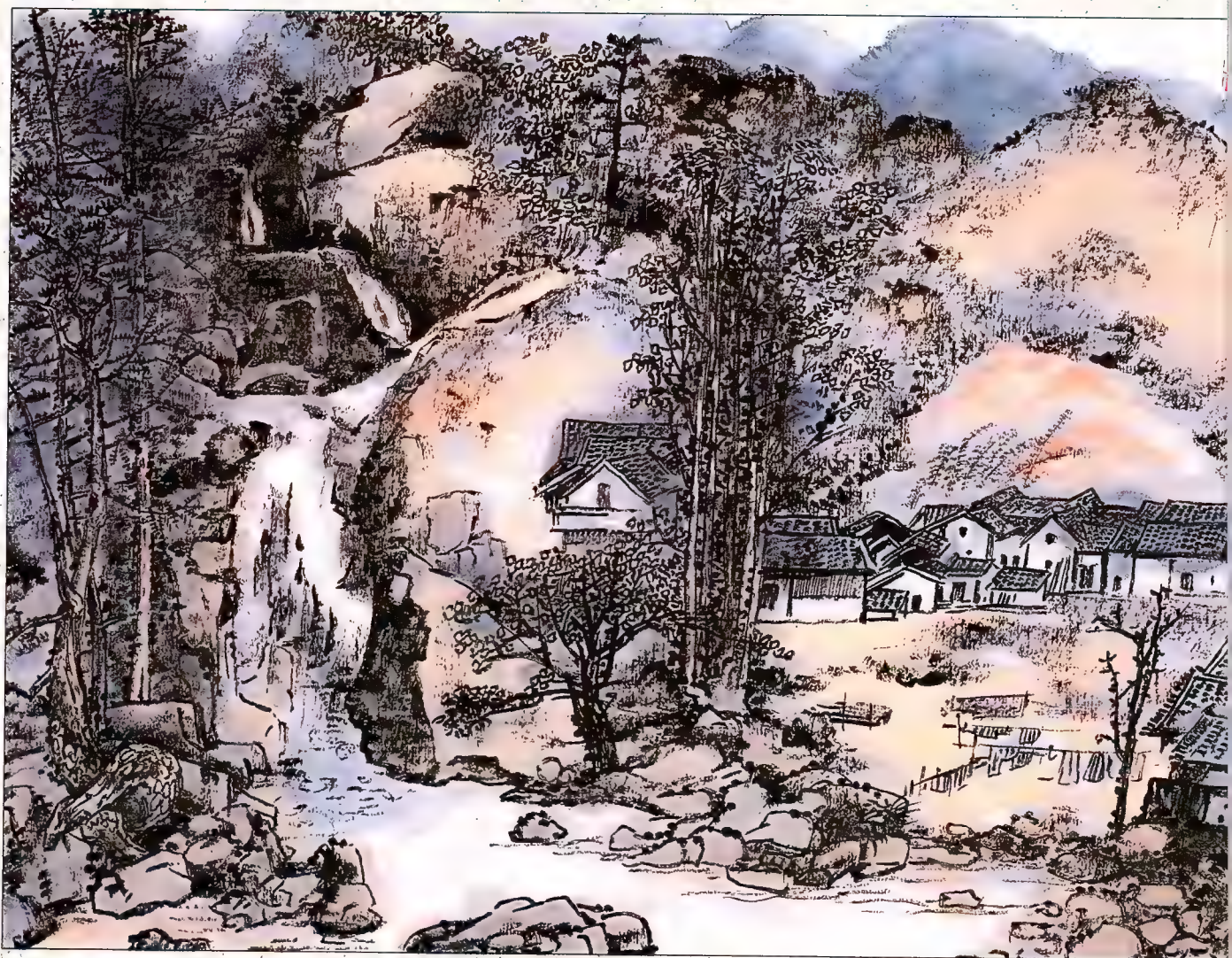
CT: Which type of painting do you find most satisfying?

Lai: Before I returned to my native village, I mainly painted mountains: Huangshan, and also Wuyishan and Jiuhuashan. Now that I have returned to Guangdong, I must strive to reflect the local scenery. 

Translated by Annette Lee

Photos supplied by the Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture

Interview conducted by Gérard Henry & Tong Chi Kwong



▲ *Nankun Mountain (Longmen County, Guangdong Province)*
Ink with colour (1986)



Qin Bridge at East Lake
(Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province)
Ink with colour (1987)



孤雲
 與歸
 鳥千
 里片
 時間
 念家
 何留
 辭家久
 未還微
 陽下橋
 木遠
 燒入秋
 山臨水不
 敢照
 恐驚馬
 平昔
 顏馬
 戴落日
 帳望
 丙寅賴其

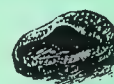




白龍潭 辛酉五月于畫山 賴其



▲ Bailong (White Dragon) Pool at Huangshan
Ink with colour (1981)



◀ Summer (Sunset at Huangshan)
Ink with colour (1986)



Suzhou: Lu Wenfu's World of Dreams

EDITORS' NOTE:

Lu Wenfu feels that he has 'a historic responsibility, a duty to write about all kinds of human life and social events, to pour out my blood and tears....' Here, in *A World of Dreams*, completed in 1983 (and given here in its entirety), he describes for us his fascination with the winding lanes and cloistered gardens, the bustling street life, the people, of one of China's most evocative ancient cities.

The life of Lu Wenfu has always been intimately bound up with the flat and watery landscapes of southern Jiangsu. Born in 1928 in a small village on the north bank of the River Yangtse, he grew up in a house just two hundred metres from the great river.

At sixteen, in 1944, he went to school in Suzhou and fell in love with the city on the spot, finding it even more beautiful than he had imagined. After a short period in the army, he returned to make Suzhou his home....

I have been to many places but the world of my dreams will always be the small lanes of Suzhou. I have walked through these lanes a myriad times and passed much time in them; it is as if my youth had flowed away from these lanes carving a deep gully in my mind, leaving me with a profoundly enduring impression.

Thirty-eight years ago, clad in a long blue cotton gown and riding in a wooden sailboat, I sped up to a small lane outside Suzhou. The lane was paved with long flagstones underneath which flowing water gurgled. It was known as a thoroughfare but it was impossible for two rickshaws to pass each other; on each side there were low one-storied houses, and bamboo poles used for drying washing stretched from the eaves on one side to eaves on the other. Above the eaves were square brick blocks with holes in them which looked just like archers' slits in an ancient wall.

After turning a corner the lane changed; on each side there were now higher buildings with black tiles, crimson railings and white walls. Bordering the lane was a long wooden gallery, the eaves of which were inlaid with painted boards, each carved differently, some with squirrels and grapes and some with the legendary eight immortals who crossed the ocean. Perhaps pretty colour fades easily, for both the crimson railings and the painted carving had already turned black or yellowed with age. Bamboo clothes-poles were slotted within the carved boards and bamboo blinds hung down, concealing windows. It seemed to me that I had seen something similar to this in a scroll-painting or a novel.

There were shops in these lanes as well with living quarters above and the shop itself below. The majority were tobacconists, grocery stores and the kind of teahouse that also sold boiled water. The teahouses were the busiest and noisiest of all, for there were always lots of men there, their left hands on the table-tops, their right feet sticking up on the long benches, holding up those shiny dark brown earthenware teacups and pouring that dark brown water down their gullets with relish. People in Suzhou call this phenomenon "flesh covering water", whereas the evening bath is known as "water covering flesh". The tea-drinkers all naturally wished to engage in elevated discussions, but in the overall buzz of sound it was impossible to distinguish what was being discussed. Only the sound of vendors' cries stood out clearly. These were the girls with baskets peddling melon seeds, sweets and cigarettes. And then there were the blind men in dark glasses playing the *erhu*, huskily singing something. I say "singing", but it came closer to weeping than anything. This small lane unrolled before me like a scroll-painting of life in a market-place.

At the end of this painting I climbed up into a small building. In fact it had two parts, divided into a building at the front and one behind, with wings on either side connecting them to form a square. The courtyard was as small as a deep well, with only two jars for collecting rain-water. If you leaned out and looked down from the front building you could see people going back and forth, a bustling market-place; leaning out of the window in the back building you could see a big river flowing below. On the river sculls creaked, the sky was bright, waves rippled and the wind and sun seemed somehow unhurried. On either bank of the river were people's homes, each house having a long window by the river and a stone jetty. The jetties were built in a marvellous way, simple yet in-

genious, using rows of many long stone slabs. One end of each slab stood out in space while the other end was embedded into the long stone wall along the river's edge. The slabs advanced in ranks towards the riverbed, like stone ladders hanging from the back door of each household. Women washing vegetables or rice would ascend or descend the heights of the ladder, appearing and disappearing in the shimmering light and the cloud shadows. Small single-oared boats would move slowly out into the current, letting it take them where it would, their holds filled with fish, shrimps, vegetables or melons. And if someone indicated from one of the windows bordering the river that they wished to buy something, the little boat would shoot over like an arrow. When the transaction was completed a basket with money in it would be lowered from the window, filled with the goods bought and hauled back up again. Then the window would be shut with a creak and the little boat slowly followed the waves once more.

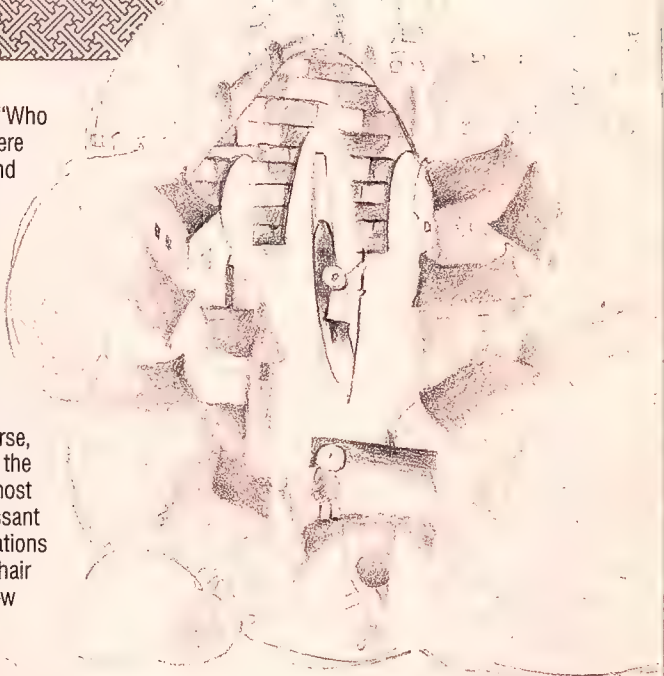
Opposite the building at the back there was a fork in the river spanned by a very high arched bridge, the balustrade of which was a stone wall which curved like a melon seed. When people crossed the bridge only their heads would appear above it. The bridge itself was exceptionally broad, having within its arch on one side an old Buddhist temple, and if I stood on a pier and looked within I could still make out the word "Namah . . ." on the yellow wall. On a moonlit night you could see the swift flowing current within the arch, a sheet of shimmering silver, and the moon's reflection fragmenting, while the temple bells spilled out after the waves of light. A poetic quality was given to these back lanes too by the stone jetties suspended between moonlight and shimmering waves, on which the noise of women pounding washing formed a chorus — "On a moonlit night in Chang'an / There is the sound of a myriad homes pounding clothes." I turned and went back up in to the building at the front. I saw the well-lit lane with the rickshaws rattling past, *wonton*-sellers banging bamboo clappers and sellers of spiced tea-flavoured eggs carrying small stoves in large baskets. At night the teahouses became places for storytellers and then the strumming of *pipas* was accompanied by the soft lilting of the Suzhou dialect. Suzhou-style story-telling and ballad-singing were high-pitched and beautiful, and the vending cry of those selling spiced tea-flavoured eggs was filled with sadness. I had not realized that a small winding lane could change so infinitely, be so different within and without, with its rows of houses dividing land and water, silence and movement. On one side was the world with all its joys and sorrows and its hubbub; on the other side were wave reflections and moonlight, and also that low, reverberating sound of an evening Buddhist bell, making it seem as if the world in its entirety could be forgotten.

I once lived in another kind of lane with high surrounding walls on either side, so high that one had to crane up to see the top; no pink apricot could reach out over these walls, for only the spring vines were able to climb up and hang in tassels over the top. The heavy main gates were always tightly shut so that not one morsel of information could squeeze out. Two mounting blocks like strange beasts lay on either side of the gates, glowering at the screen wall opposite, sombre and fierce. The screen wall had a carved stone border and a plain centre. There were few passers-by in lanes such as these, but occasionally a flower-

seller would utter a long drawn-out cry: "Who will buy my white orchids?" For the rest, there were only the sparrows cheeping and chattering on the gatehouse and magpies hopping on and off the eaved walls. It was as if it was still possible to see princelings or the scions of high officials ride into the lane mounted on fine steeds. The black lacquer gate with brass door-knockers would creak open while four servants waiting within the gatehouse would immediately leap up to help the princeling step onto the block and slide off the horse, which would then be led off and tied by the side of the screen wall. Or you could almost hear the sound of horns and incessant firecrackers and see lanterns and decorations hanging at the gate and a bridal sedan-chair being carried into the lane. And after a few years a memorial to a widow's fidelity or chastity would be raised where that bridal chair had passed. In the yellowing pages of local records it would perhaps be possible to find the name of that upright, moral woman, but the memorial would already have fallen, leaving only two large square stone pillars still standing there.

I brushed past those stone pillars as I entered the lane and stopped before the door of a building. A bamboo plaque was nailed to this door, which was never closed, and an old tailor-cum-watchman did his business in the entrance-hall, watching the entrance for a reduced rent. There was sometimes not a tailor but an old woman with poor eyesight who wore glasses and bent over an embroidery frame, embroidering dragons, phoenixes and bright butterflies. She was one of those ageing seamstresses who spent their whole lives making bridal clothes for others, and even though her eyesight was going, when wearing glasses she could still split coloured silken threads into eight strands. Within entrance-halls of this kind there were often six-leaved doors, some cream-coloured, some with gold-leaf on a dark-blue ground, but here the gold-leaf had turned black in many uneven blotches. Only the first leaf of the door was open so that it was impossible to see at one glance what went on within. I slid inside but still did not see very much on entering, coming instead into a dark, dim world, a long, narrow, seemingly endless corridor. There were many arched entrances and small doorways on either side of this corridor, but each was shut tight, with only a faint light filtering out from windows dispersed far between. Peering on tiptoe through the windows I could see a row of halls down the left side, all dark and gloomy, while on the right side there was a series of courtyards with rockeries, tall bamboos and small buildings with crimson balustrades — a green and shady place. This had once been the home of a wealthy family in which each wife, concubine, son and daughter had their own quarters with a garden attached.

I once spent half a year living in a certain garden which was almost one-third of an acre in size. It could be described as either a courtyard or a flower garden, for this tiny space had all the characteristics of a park, with an artificial hill made from a pile of rocks brought there from a lake. On top of the hill there was a cobble-stone path which twisted and turned, dipping and rising abruptly, one moment passing through a cavern, the next crossing a small bridge over a gully; the gully was



just a chink and the bridge was small enough to resemble a model. If you were to follow the curves of the path the distance would be surprising, but if you were to go straight up to the top of the hill it would only be a matter of four to five paces. The hill-top was masked by towering old trees through which the sunlight shone down in rays of gold while everywhere dappled spots of light and shade flickered. There was a lotus pond at the foot of the hill with a crooked stone bridge across it. The crooked bridge was connected to the gallery, which in turn was connected to the waterside pavilions and then curved back to join up with the small building which served as my living quarters. On a rainy day you could stroll along the gallery and watch the raindrops on each layer of branches and leaves shatter into fragments and see a fine shrouding rain submerge all the buildings and pavilions in mist. If you sat in a pavilion for a brief rest you could see the pond slowly flooding until the little crooked bridge was buried beneath the water.

The garden was wild and unkempt; there was white guano on the ground and the caves were the haunts of foxes. Apart from the birdsong, the most animated thing there was the lotus pond: there the plants grew luxuriantly, crowding the water-lilies up against the low embankment, and in early summer charming little tadpoles floated in the clear water within the rock crevices. The pointed tip of the lotus leaf seemed incomparably sharp, capable of poking up between other thickly growing aquatic plants and boring out onto the water's surface in the space of one night. Yet there were some which did not make it, for carp are very fond of soft, young lotus leaves. At night, the pond was even more active, the croaking of frogs was like drumbeats, now loud, now silent, and in the time of silence you could hear a fish spouting. With a great whooshing sound a large fish leapt out of the water, startling awake the sleeping birds in the trees so that they twittered restlessly. Peace came again only when the croaking of the frogs rose once more. It was very lonely living in that high-walled, deeply receding courtyard with only books for company. I often sat on the artificial hill and read, becoming so completely immersed that several ants would climb up onto me. One mustn't squash that breed of ant for they had a strange smell like powerful turpentine, making me think they had grown up feeding on the resin of the pine tree.



Comparatively speaking I prefer another sort of lane, one filled with life's piquancy and combining all the characteristics of the various lanes together. A lane with high-walled, receding courtyards and low one-storey dwellings; with tobaccoists, flatbread-makers and shops selling boiled water. Behind certain facades lived several dozen families and the entrance-halls were comparatively small. At the end of the lane there would be a public well while within the lane the stone pillars once supporting memorial plaques would still be standing. A lane of this kind would have a canal running alongside it but it would be very different from those outside the city, with houses pressing desperately close together on either bank, squeezing the canal so that it became a narrow water channel. A scene of this kind was already familiar to the Tang dynasty poet who wrote, "There is little spare space in old palaces / And many small bridges span the water channels."

When one entered a lane such as this on an early summer morning a mist would be lifting and there would be a group of women drawing water from the well at the end of the lane, languidly pulling up the rope attached to the bucket as if still drowsy from the previous night and still clad in voluminous striped pyjamas. In fact the entire lane had awakened long before this. The retired old men

had already gone off to the tea-gardens in the parks or to some teahouse to practise shadow-boxing, drink tea and chat. Those too old to leave home anymore would potter in their courtyard, tending their miniature landscape gardens or sitting blankly in a rattan chair pouring cup after cup of strong tea down their throats. The housewives would already have whisked through their chores and left for the small, noisy food market with a basket on their arm. They would bustle into the small lane, discussing whether or not there were any certain kinds of food available and if they were good or bad, cheap or expensive. It was only after the bell of the rubbish cart sounded that people returned from the market one by one, the morning struggle to buy food now over.

Not long after the food-buying brigade dispersed, activity in the lane would reach another peak. All those off to work seemed to come crowding out almost at the same time, some leaving the lane and heading eastwards, others entering it and going towards the west. Those with satchels were bouncing and full of energy, those carrying children told the kids to say goodbye to their grandmothers. The flashing gleam of bicycles and the ringing of bicycle bells were only common sights. The lane became a bicycling arena or exhibition in which insufficiently skilled females had no choice but to push their bikes through the lane before mounting. And yet this peak was like that of a wave, settling back quietly after half an hour.

When those leaving for work or school had gone, the tea-drinkers and shadow-boxers began to return. As these people entered the lane they were unhurried, their bearing calm and their eyes half-closed as if there were nothing left to startle them here. For them the greatest joy was marriage; the greatest sorrow, death; the greatest factor for alarm was fire and the most frightening thing was the sound of guns. They had been through it all and nothing confounded them. If you were interested in the things that they were not, the experience of each one of them was worth hoarding. Some had been famous actors; some were uniquely skilled; some were top-grade workers who had worked at the Hanyang Arsenal making guns and cannon; there were others whose histories were by no means honourable but nevertheless fascinating. If you were to research these people's lives you could go back a century in time. But a cinematic technique such as the flashback is needed, for otherwise you would find it hard to believe that bent, wizened old lady with white hair once performed in *A Goddess Scatters Flowers*.

Summer is an outdoor time. After nightfall the stars hang down low above the lanes and a wind comes pouring in, brushing past the door of every home. This wind had a powerful attraction, for it drew out into the open all life hidden within the small front yards and receding courtyards. Small stools and rattan chairs were placed on either side of the lane and people would sit or lie there, receiving the benediction of the cool breeze. This was particularly true in those houses with entrances off the lanes and a common brick-floored area which served as an arena for enjoying the cool air and resting a while. Cold water was poured over the bricks and neighbouring families would congregate there. Even the old and bedridden were carried out by their grandsons in their rattan chairs to be greeted by their neighbours. Then all the secrets and gossip of ordinary people could be ferreted out here including discussions of oil, salt, firewood and rice, new daughters-in-law and

daughters leaving home to get married — all became topics of conversation. Only the younger generation were more mobile: young friends would arrive and go off again in a group; then along would come someone in a dress who would stand at a distance beneath a streetlamp and beckon, and a rattan chair would creak as a young lad was enticed away. The young are reluctant to look back into the past too much, preferring to make more demands on the future, and those who demanded the most were not outside at all but facing their books, outlines or blueprints, interminably sweating within their rooms as they toiled away within the haze from mosquito coils.

Strangely enough, there are not so many people out in the lanes this summer taking advantage of the cool air — there is a tendency nowadays for the formerly outdoor life of summer to be concealed behind doors. The abominable television is the culprit, its popularity rising daily in leaps and bounds. Old and young alike gather together in dimly-lit rooms, every one of them silent and staring ahead as an electric fan turns round and round. Now you can have cool air and be entertained at the same time, so no one wants to go outside anymore. A diverting sight now is the keen amateur TV assembly-men, youths with dishevelled hair and untidy clothes who carry out already assembled TVs still lacking their frames, set them down on the ground and show off their technical wizardry, providing a free service to those who are not yet able to afford a TV or do not yet wish to buy one. And quite a few people sit around quietly, just as at an open-air film-show in the countryside.

The day's activities in these small lanes are wound up by the young. At the quietest time lovers come and go in the empty, silent lane, their footsteps matching in close, rhythmic harmony. During that season the streetlamps are very bright, reflecting off the whitewashed walls and turning the moon hanging above the lane a dark red shade. The footsteps halt, a key turns, the woman pushes open the door and enters; the man hesitates before leaving, turning to look back as he walks away; the closed door opens again and the woman leans far out to wave again and again — this couple is filled with love and understanding. There is something wrong with that couple, however, for the man seems at a loss and stands to one side while the woman, piqued and mortified, leans against the stone pillars of a memorial. Both seem stubbornly ready to wait for the moon to go down. Go home, young lady. It is cold and dewy outside and it is unwise to stay out too long. Nor can you rely on those stone pillars — they are just inert, unfeeling objects....

When you are faced with a main thoroughfare you want to hurry; when faced with a mountain you want to climb it; when faced with the sea you want to sail far away. And what about when you are faced with deeply receding lanes such as these? Well, then you stroll along slowly, stroll past those high walls, stroll along over the small, broken cobble-stones, stroll along with your hand against the stone pillars of the memorial to give you support, go looking for art's realm, go exploring life's resources, listen carefully for history's echo . . . perhaps I have found something small which for the time being at least is recorded here and, while it may not seem like much, do not be impatient but let me continue to stroll along slowly....

Translated by Alison Bailey

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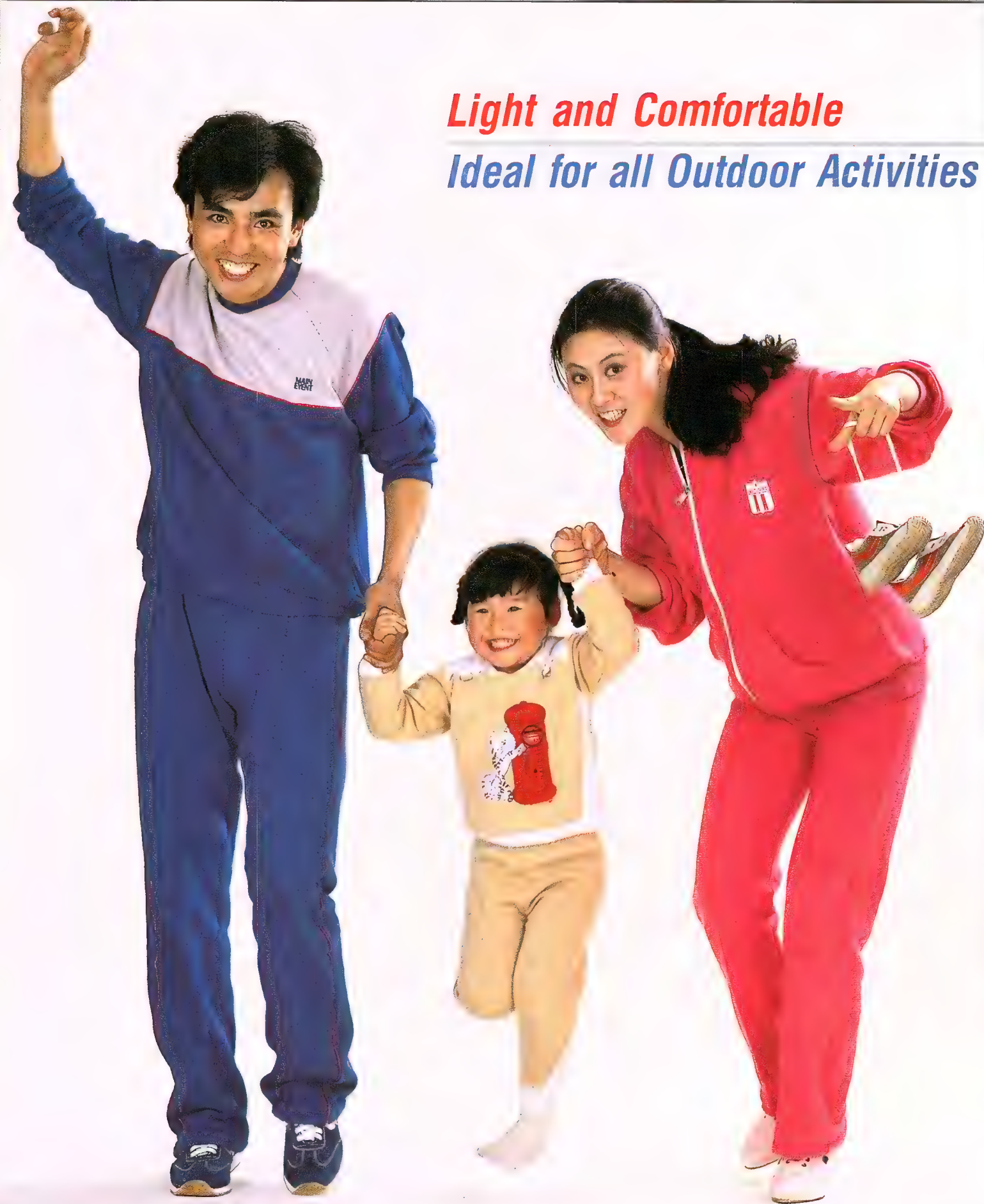
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BURANG

Lively West-Tibetan Trading Post



Field patterns

Photos by Paul Kaetzke

In Western Tibet, on the Indian-Nepalese border, beyond the Lipu Pass at 5,453 metres, lies Burang (Taklakhot), an old Tibetan trading post where wool and carpets are exchanged for Nepalese handicrafts. Here saddle-cloths of Tibetan design are sold, as well as the famous wooden teacups lined with silver. Even an occasional tin of Frankfurter sausages from Germany or chicken cooked with chestnuts finds its way up the steep Lipu Pass and lands in the small shop opposite the new hotel in the industrial part of the town.

When we arrive all the hotel rooms are fully booked by Indian pilgrims on their way to Mount Kailash (Kangrinboqê Peak). By mutual agreement of the Chinese and Indian governments, small groups of Indian worshippers are allowed to cross the border at this point and enter Tibet to visit the mythical throne of their Lord Shiva on top of Mount Kailash about 120 kilometres into the hinterland beyond Burang.

My son and I are mere tourists, and have not come up to Burang via India or Nepal. This border is closed to the likes of us; and so we have had to travel more than three thousand kilometres from Hong Kong via the Silk Road, from Kashi (Kashgar) in western Xinjiang to Shiquanhe, administrative centre of western Tibet's Ngari District, and thence to Burang.

We travel on the back of a truck, my son on top of a towering load of sheepskins, myself in the driver's cabin with the driver and two other passengers. While my son, holding on for dear life to the iron structure holding back the sheepskins, is thrown up and tossed like a pancake at each hole in the road, I am able to enjoy the grandiose landscape. Lake Manasarowar (Mapam Yumco), circular like the sun, legendary bath of the Goddess Parvati, Lord Shiva's consort, once a site with temples, is now abandoned. Next to it is Lake Rakastal (La'nga Co), whose shores have never been built upon because, with its moon shape, it was thought to be the abode of demons. Behind them both, the towering white dome of Mount Kailash at 6,714 metres above sea-level.

In the evening we arrive in Burang. We pass the outlying areas with their gaily fluttering flags, the red banner of socialism and the many-coloured prayer flags on flat-roofed farms, and slowly descend to the town centre, where a bridge crosses the Kongque (Karnali) River. Here yaks, horses and sheep are watered, women wash their clothes and men their hair, and on the sandy river bank on our side next to the bridge is a little market between tents, where beads, comics, printed prayer

leaves, saddle-cloths and a few watermelons are being sold. On the other side of the bridge a path leads up along the steep cliff past cave-dwellings, ladder walls with doors and windows, reminiscent of Pueblo Indian abodes in the United States. The road dips beyond the hill and leads to rows of tents, the Nepalese traders' camp. It also leads up to the top of the hill and the once powerful monastery Simbeling. My son climbs the path to photograph the circling predatory birds that have made their nests among the ruins.



The Nepalese traders' camp



Tibetan women cross the bridge over the Kongque

Back on the other side of the river, we continue along the road to the new, industrial part of Burang. Next to the modern waterworks a giant stone bears a prayer flag. Like anything outstanding in old Burang, whether it be natural or man-made — the ruined gate of Simbeling Monastery, the bridge over the Karnali, the farmhouse roofs, even a truck — it is worth marking in this way. But the industrial part of the town on the outskirts seems to be more sober. Behind government shops selling harness, saddles, bags of barley meal and tea at fixed prices lies the hospital, the

new hotel, and a small, low Chinese hostel. A young woman is busy cracking nuts with the back of a gun in one of the open rooms. She invites us in for dinner, but all the rooms are taken. The hotel is full.

At the far end of Burang are piles of gravel gained from the banks of the river, are workshops and factories, and beyond them farmland. As we look over the plain to the far snow-capped mountains, we can hear the clear, piercing shouts of the harvesters. Soon it will be winter, when the whole region will be covered and silenced by snow; the Lipu Pass will be impassable, and Burang will be cut off completely from civilization.

Through a gate in front of a courtyard which contains goats, parts of cars, a tent and washing hung out to dry comes our truck driver, Mr Liu. Has he not told us to come and stay at his place? The walls of his room are hung with posters of cars, aeroplanes, landscapes. On the window sill are books on history. What do we think of de Gaulle, Adenauer? Our Hong Kong friend, Terry, who shared the truck with us and who is also staying with Mr Liu, acts as translator. Could we send plans of the layout of a Mercedes engine?

We are frequently interrupted by Mr Liu's customers wishing to buy tins, wine and brandy. But not only does he sell, he also gives freely to his Tibetan friends. Time and again we are invited to drink, 'bottoms up', and are serenaded with couplets. At the end of a round some of the couplets are danced to. Mr Liu, once the manager and foreman of the mechanic workshop where he still lives, has many friends. We do our best to reciprocate with a European drinking song until we are finally given part of the office floor to sleep on.

Lovely Burang! But if we are not out before the main route to Lhasa closes for the winter, we will be stuck without permission to stay. As for the other, the southern route — what is it doing on our map? It has no right to be there; it has long been closed because of storms, floods and landslides. Recently a Western girl (the Australian Sorrel Wilby, who has since written a book) reported on her hair-raising experiences along that route. Our only possibility of getting away from the dead-end which is Burang is to wait for our host to take us back to Shiquanhe.

At the end of the week we again pass the abandoned shores of Lake Manasarovar with its five coloured sands which pilgrims eat to further the health of body and soul. In the rising sun the white cap of Kailash gleams. It needs no flag to top it.

Anita Kaetzke

(Continued from page 28)

Stories Behind the Relics (II)



the Tang dynasty, and the wharf there is the city's oldest. This cobbled street runs for over a kilometre from half-way up the northern slope of Yuntai Hill in a gentle descent towards the riverside at its foot. If you climb the street, after passing under the Zhaoguan Pagoda (dating from the Yuan dynasty) and three arched brick gateways, you come to a square structure with flying eaves known as Ferry Pavilion. It was here that travellers waiting to take a ferry to Jinshan or across the Yangtse sheltered from rain and wind after the opening of the Grand Canal during the Sui dynasty, as this place was then used purely as a passenger embarkation point. And since, in the Tang dynasty, Zhenjiang fell under the jurisdiction of Jiangning, which was earlier known as Jinling, the wharf is also known as the Jinling Ferry.

The historical records tell of many a traveller who made use of the pavilion here, including Marco Polo and such famous poets of the Tang and Song dynasties as Li Bai and Su Dongpo. We can imagine them composing poems as they waited, looking out over the great river. A short poem entitled *At Jinling Ferry* by the Tang-dynasty poet Zhang Hu perfectly expresses the feelings of a lonely, homesick traveller as he watches sleepless through the night:

*This one-storey inn at Jinling ferry
Is a miserable lodging-place for the night —
But across the dead moon's ebbing tide
Lights from Guazhou beckon on the river.*

The Grand Canal's Longest Bridge

About three kilometres south of Suzhou there is a wonderful sight: a multi-span stone bridge [8] flanks the western bank of the Jiangnan Canal. Known as Baodai (Precious Belt) Bridge, this — the longest stone bridge on the Grand Canal — dates back to early times. And of course there is a story attached to how it got its name.

In the year 610, during the Sui dynasty, the Jiangnan Canal was opened up between Zhenjiang and Hangzhou, greatly easing water traffic between north and south. However, where the waters from Lake Dantai, swollen with those from Lake Taihu, entered the canal, they formed whirlpools over an area of three or four hundred metres, posing an extreme danger for shipping.

In an effort to solve this problem, in 816 Wang Zhongshu, a Tang-dynasty prefect of Suzhou, decided to build a bridge to control the waters flowing out from the lake. But the funds available ran out before completion of his ambitious project, and Wang Zhongshu had to donate his own precious belt for the common good. When the bridge was eventually finished, it was named in memory of his benevolent gesture.

This is not only the longest, it is also the most beautiful of the ancient bridges along the canal. It is 317 metres long, flat for the convenience of boat trackers, and has fifty-three arches. It is said that, on the evening of the eighteenth of the eighth month of the lunar calendar (which falls somewhen in September), when the moon hangs bright in the sky, one can see it reflected in each of the arches, producing a string of moons in the water.

Translated by Wang Mingjie

The Southern Grand Canal – A Climatic Profile

We continue our study of the climatic differences along the 1,780 kilometres of the Grand Canal as we follow its course southward into Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang. These regions fall within China's subtropical zone, so they are generally warm and humid. However, they do still present four distinct seasons as a result of the influence of the monsoons.

Humid Spring

While the north is quite dry in the spring, the southern reaches of the Grand Canal receive abundant rainfall between March and May, amounting to 300-420 mm – about 30% of the area's annual figure. The high humidity keeps the temperature from rising too rapidly. Rice is grown extensively; these well-irrigated plains have been used as paddy fields for centuries. In most places two crops of rice and a crop of winter wheat can be grown every year. Cotton and rape are also widely cultivated while, in the hills of Zhejiang, tea, timber and bamboo are important products.

Hot Summer

From May onwards, the summer monsoons coming from the south meet the polar front and produce what are known as the 'plum rains' since they tend to coincide with the time when the plums are ripening. The rain belt moves slowly north, reaching northern Jiangsu by the end of June. These 'plum rains' are very important for the overall annual rainfall, accounting for up to 70% of total rainfall during June and July.

The dry season follows. The driest period is from mid-July to mid-August when rainfall is only 30-35 mm, about 35% of that which falls in the northern plains at this time. The temperature soars to an



The Grand Canal

average of 32-33.3°C during the hottest days of July. There are between ten and twenty-two days in the summer when the temperature rises to over 35°C. Thunderstorms do however develop during this hot, sticky period and help to alleviate the summer drought.

At night there is little drop in temperature because of the high humidity, and the average minimum temperature in July may be as much as 25-26°C. People often stay outdoors until late at night in the hope of keeping cool (air-conditioning is non-existent outside the major tourist hotels) and many lose a considerable amount of weight during the summer months.

Long Autumn

While the temperature in areas along the northern reaches of the Grand Canal falls rather sharply from September onwards, in the south – Hangzhou, for example – the monthly temperature drop is only about 5-6°C.

There may be some rain in September and the temperature is still quite high at

that time. The south's best autumnal days, here too referred to as 'golden autumn', arrive towards the end of September, about one month later than in the north. Autumn continues through into November, when the average temperature is around 12°C. While the trees in Beijing are almost bare, Hangzhou's are still lush and green.

Mild Winter

Winter brings the greatest climatic differences between north and south. Take the average January temperature, for example: Hangzhou's 3.8°C is 8.4°C higher than Beijing's -4.6°C. Whereas the lowest temperature ever recorded in Beijing was -27.4°C (22 February 1966), that for Hangzhou was -9.6°C (6 February 1969).

There are also massive differences in humidity levels. The average relative humidity in Beijing in January is 45%. The equivalent figure for Hangzhou may be as much as 77%. However, this does mean that winter in the south can be a dank, muggy experience compared to the crisp, bracing cold of the north.

Cruises from Wuxi

Name of pleasure craft	Seating capacity	Charge for cruises to		Catering capacity	Catering service
		Grand Canal	Lake Taihu		
Chunqiu (Spring and Autumn Dragon Boat)	62	—	¥2,000	5-6 tables	At least 2 tables. ¥500, ¥700 or ¥1,000 upwards per table
Xiake Imperial Boat	38	¥600	¥600	3 tables	At least 2 tables. ¥300, ¥500 or ¥700 upwards per table
Guyunhe (Grand Canal Imperial Boat)	38	¥600	¥600	2 tables	At least 2 tables. ¥300, ¥500 or ¥700 upwards per table

1 All charges are on a charter basis. Individual travellers or small groups pay ¥25 each for cruises on board 'Chunqiu', ¥15 on 'Guyunhe' and 'Xiake'. In the case that the number of passengers falls short of ten, extra charges will be levied.

2 Cruise schedule: Departure: 8:00 or 8:30 a.m.

1:30 or 2:00 p.m.

Duration of cruise on Grand Canal: 1 hr 15 min

Duration of cruise on Lake Taihu: 2 hr 30 min



Average Climatic Conditions of Major Cities Along Southern Grand Canal

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Zhenjiang	Temperature (°C)	1.6	3.2	7.9	14.1	19.2	24.0	27.7	27.3	22.4	16.5	10.2	4.1
	Rainfall (mm)	30.4	40.9	66.3	84.8	85.4	152.3	206.2	135.0	128.2	45.1	42.9	28.7
Wuxi	Temperature (°C)	2.5	3.9	8.3	14.3	19.1	23.9	28.1	27.5	22.8	16.9	11.0	5.2
	Rainfall (mm)	35.2	54.6	76.9	105.6	110.1	167.7	144.1	122.2	104.2	56.4	46.4	33.8
Suzhou	Temperature (°C)	3.1	4.5	8.5	14.5	19.5	23.9	28.2	27.9	23.3	11.6	11.9	5.8
	Rainfall (mm)	42.0	62.7	82.4	107.2	112.3	165.0	120.4	121.6	136.4	51.2	46.3	40.7
Hangzhou	Temperature (°C)	3.8	5.1	9.3	15.4	20.2	24.3	28.6	28.0	23.3	17.7	12.1	6.3
	Rainfall (mm)	62.2	88.7	114.1	130.4	179.9	196.2	126.5	136.5	177.6	77.9	54.7	54.0

Train Schedules Beijing — Suzhou — Hangzhou

123 F.T.	119 F.T.	109 F.T.	Train Station	No.	110 F.T.	120 F.T.	124 F.T.
	15:23	12:31	Beijing		13:47	11:40	
09:28	17:15	14:31	Tianjin West		11:07	09:28	07:10
14:34	22:34	20:24	Jinan		05:26	04:14	02:23
20:22	03:49	01:41	Xuzhou		00:11	22:58	21:09
02:24	09:31	07:22	Nanjing		18:31	17:44	15:11
03:30	10:42	08:51	Zhenjiang		17:17	16:31	13:49
04:29	11:44	10:32	Changzhou		16:10	15:34	12:43
05:11	12:24	11:24	Wuxi		15:13	14:53	11:49
05:51	13:02	12:06	Suzhou		14:31	14:05	10:54
07:22	(* Zhenru) 14:17		Shanghai			12:45 (* Zhenru)	09:38
	19:10		Hangzhou			08:54	

F.T. — Fast through passenger train

* Zhenru Station in Shanghai's suburbs

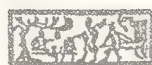
Major Hotels in Zhenjiang, Wuxi, Suzhou and Hangzhou

City	Name	Address	Telephone
Zhenjiang	Jinshan Hotel	1 Jinshan Road West	26962
	Jingkou Hotel	407 Zhongshan Road	23561
	Yiquan Hotel	Yiquan Road	23422
Wuxi	Hubin Hotel	West of Liyuan Garden	26712
	Liangxi Hotel	147 Nanshangtang	26812
	Meilidu Hotel	2 Liangxi Road	669420
	Shuixiu Hotel	West of Liyuan Garden	668591
	Taihu Hotel	Meiyuan Garden	667901
Suzhou	Nanlin Hotel	19 Gunxiufang, Shiquan Street	24641 24645
	Gusu Hotel	115 Shiquan Street	24689 24680
	Suzhou Hotel	115 Shiquan Street	24646 24647
	Xucheng Hotel	120 Sanxiang Road	34557
	Dragon Hotel	Shuguang Road	54488
Hangzhou	Huagang Hotel	4 Xishan Road	71324
	Huajiaoshan Guesthouse	16 Faxiang Alley, Huanhu Road West	71224
	Hangzhou Hotel	78 Beishan Road	22921
	Overseas Chinese Hotel	15 Hubin Road	23401
	Wanghu Hotel	2 Huancheng Road West	71024
	Wanghulou Hotel	50 Zhongshan Road South	6161
	West Lake Guesthouse	Huanhu Road West	26867
	Zhejiang Guesthouse	68 Santaishan Road	25601 (22483)



Tianjin's New Station Unveiled

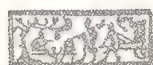
At the beginning of October, Tianjin celebrated the opening of a grand new railway station complex to replace the existing 100-year-old building, which was no longer able to cope with the volume of passenger traffic. The new station, with an area of 260,000 square metres, incorporates the renovated old building, a post office, a commercial centre and other service facilities. As a hub connecting two major railway lines with the port of Tianjin, this project will play an important role in the municipality's economic development.



Hotel News

The **Jingrong Hotel** in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, soft-opened this October. Its facilities include a coffee shop and bar, Chinese and Western restaurants, shopping centre, meeting room and business facilities, beauty salon, billiard room and ticketing services.

Still in Sichuan, the **Holiday Inn Chongqing** will be opening in late 1988/early 1989. The Holiday Inn chain has two other hotels opening at around the same time in Dalian, Liaoning Province, and Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong. Scheduled for a November 1988 opening is another member of the chain, the **Holiday Inn Xi'an**. Located at the East Gate of the historic capital of Shaanxi, this 355-room hotel will include a Western restaurant-cum-coffee shop, Chinese restaurant, cake shop, conference facilities for up to 200 people, indoor swimming pool, business centre, games room, health club and sauna. Holiday Inn plans to have twenty hotels in China by 1995.



Further Areas Declared Open

Thirty-eight more cities and counties have been declared open since the end of October, bringing the total to 542. Foreigners with valid visas or residence cards may now travel in these areas without the need to apply for special permits.

In Hubei Province, the cities opened are Enshi, Lichuan and Zhicheng, the counties Badong, Xianfeng, Jianshi, Dangyang, Zhijiang, Yichang, Xingshan, Zigui, Jiayu, Yunxian, plus Changyang and Wufeng Tujia Autonomous Counties.

In Yunnan, foreigners may now visit the cities of Gejiu and Kaiyuan and the counties of Eryuan, Jianchuan, Binchuan, Lufeng, Wuding, Yuanmou, Nanhua, Yongren, Dayao, Yao'an, Jianshui, Mile, Luxi, Yongsheng, Jiangchuan, Chengjiang, as well as the Weishan Yi-Hui Autonomous County.

Lastly, the city of Heihe and the counties of Wuchang, Shangzhi and Suileng are now open to foreigners in Heilongjiang Province.



Self-Guided Tours of the Forbidden City

This September, Beijing's Imperial Palace Museum introduced a self-guiding system for individual visitors — a common idea in museums elsewhere in the world, but a 'first' for China.

Those wishing to take advantage of the service will be issued with a Walkman and a pre-recorded tape at the main entrance and given explanations as they pass along the signposted route. This has been designed to give them maximum coverage of the vast complex and its scattered museum buildings.

The tapes, recorded by mother-tongue speakers, will be available in more than ten languages and dialects including English, French, German, Japanese, Cantonese and Fujianese. This novel project was apparently developed especially for the Beijing museum by an American tourism company.



Chu Tomb Puzzle

Archaeologists have made an unusual find in a 2,000-year-old tomb of the State of Chu from the Spring and Autumn Period (770-475 B.C.) in Dangyang County, Hubei Province. Besides an outer and two inner coffins, the tomb contained the remains of five young female sacrificial victims, thirteen cattle, a pig, a goat and a dog bound to a wooden stake. Previous excavations of Chu rulers' tombs have apparently revealed only nine head of cattle. As the tomb contained no inscription, it has so far proved impossible to identify the status of the deceased, a man of around fifty, whose tomb also yielded exquisite lacquerware, bronzes and gold-inlaid armour plates.



Small Qingdao Island

This scenic island, closed to visitors for years, has now been reopened. It lies opposite Qingdao Bridge in the coastal city of Qingdao in Shandong Province. The white lighthouse on the summit was built in 1900 by Germans during the reign of the Qing emperor Guangxu (1875-1909).



Science Museum Opens in Beijing

Part of the new China Science and Technology Museum in northern Beijing is now open to the public. The initial exhibition includes more than five hundred items and practical models on traditional Chinese technology in the fields of astronomy, bronze-casting, the making of paper and ceramics, textiles, embroidery and medicines.

When finished, the museum — the first of its kind in China — will have a floor space of 53,000 square metres. It will eventually also host training and experimental educational projects. The second and third floors will concentrate on modern technology: electromagnetism, human physiology, acoustics, nuclear technology and information technology.



Photographic Exhibition

The Pao Siu Loong Gallery in the Hongkong Arts Centre, Hong Kong, is staging an exhibition entitled 'Leong Ka Tai on China: One to Twenty-Four' from December 15 to 22. Leong's first one-man show in five years will feature photographic studies taken over the intervening years during visits to the mainland.



Hong Kong's New China Ferry Terminal

This November saw the opening of Hong Kong's largest passenger ferry terminal to the mainland. The new China Ferry Terminal in Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, will be able to handle 4,400 passengers an hour and nineteen million a year once it is in full operation. It can simultaneously accommodate three large passenger ships or seven of the jetcraft which currently ply between Hong Kong and twenty mainland ports.



'Last Emperor' Package Tour

Bernardo Bertolucci's Oscar-sweeping film *The Last Emperor* is credited with bringing China and its attractions to the attention of a wider audience. Cashing in on this wave of international interest, this September China's tourism authorities launched a special 'Last Emperor' package tour for foreigners.

This includes a visit to the birthplace of the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, Aisin-Gioro Puyi (1906-1967), as well as sun-dry palaces associated with him in Beijing, his houses of exile in Tianjin and Changchun, Jilin, 'capital' of Manchukuo under Japanese auspices, and the prison in Fushun, Liaoning Province, where he was detained for ten years before being released in 1959 as an ordinary commoner. Apart from Puyi's personal belongings, paintings and calligraphy, the manuscript of his autobiography *From Emperor to Citizen* will also be on display.



WESTERN HUBEI

Only very recently opened up to foreigners, the rugged, mountainous western regions of Hubei Province bordering on Sichuan shelter a famous Taoist community and a minority people of ancient lineage:

- Wudangshan — Taoist Wonderland
- In Tujia Country
- Song of the Shennong Boatmen
- Needlework as a Demonstration of Motherly Love

Other themes will include:

- Cheung Chau: Island Oasis (Hong Kong)
- Beijing Opera Roles



The Penglai Mirage Draws Crowds

Penglai, a town with a 1,000-year-old castle on the north coast of the Shandong Peninsula which has been associated since time immemorial with legends of the immortals, is attracting ever greater attention because of the mirage which appears over the sea north of the town on rare occasions. Three mirages have already been reported in 1988. Around 10,000 domestic and foreign tourists gather there every day in the hope of seeing the phenomenon, which is said to bring good fortune.

The local tourist authority recently announced that Penglai's Ancient Warship Museum will be ready by the end of this year. Exhibits will include a Ming-dynasty man-of-war with its armaments, including cannons, and other fittings. This will underline Penglai's importance as a naval base during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).



Capital's Sightseeing Bus Service

The Beijing Tourism Motor Company has introduced a new service. Intended for both foreign and Chinese tourists, with bilingual guides, sightseeing buses will facilitate movement between major sites in the Chinese capital.

The buses leave the Great Wall Hotel between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. in a circular tour via the Jianguo Hotel, Beijing Railway Station, Wangfujing Street, the Forbidden City, Tian'anmen Square, the Nationalities Hotel, Jingshan Park, Yonghegong (Lama Temple), the Workers' Stadium and back to the Great Wall Hotel. The whole circuit covers about forty kilometres and takes roughly two hours, with eighteen stops. The price is 15 yuan per person. Passengers may alight from the bus wherever they wish and continue with a later bus, but back-tracking is not permitted on the same ticket.



New Beijing Hotel/Residential Complex

Continuing the trend in the Chinese capital for complexes comprising both hotel rooms and apartments aimed at expatriates is the **Hotel Yanshan**, which is to soft-open in January 1989. The international-standard 255-room hotel, operated by a subsidiary of the Hong Kong tour operator Morning Star, consists of two 17-storey blocks with business centre, health centre, supermarket, ballroom, bar, disco, and Chinese and Western restaurants. The complex also incorporates 62 apartments, each with living room, two bedrooms, private facilities and an office.

The hotel is located in the northwestern sector of Beijing, which has recently been earmarked as the capital's new Technology and Industry Experimental Development Zone.



More Railways for Northwest China

Over the past decade the state has spent around two billion yuan on upgrading and extending the railway network in China's vast northwestern regions. There are now more than 9,000 kilometres of track.

Among the larger ongoing projects is the Qinghai-Tibet Railway; one section of nearly 700 kilometres between Hargai and Golmud crosses the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau at 3,000 metres above sea-level. Another line added during the last ten years is the Turpan-Korla section of the Southern Xinjiang Railway, which runs for 476 kilometres through the desert in the shadow of the Tianshan Mountains. The latest project is the 460-kilometre Northern Xinjiang Railway which will eventually link up with the Soviet Union's railway system.

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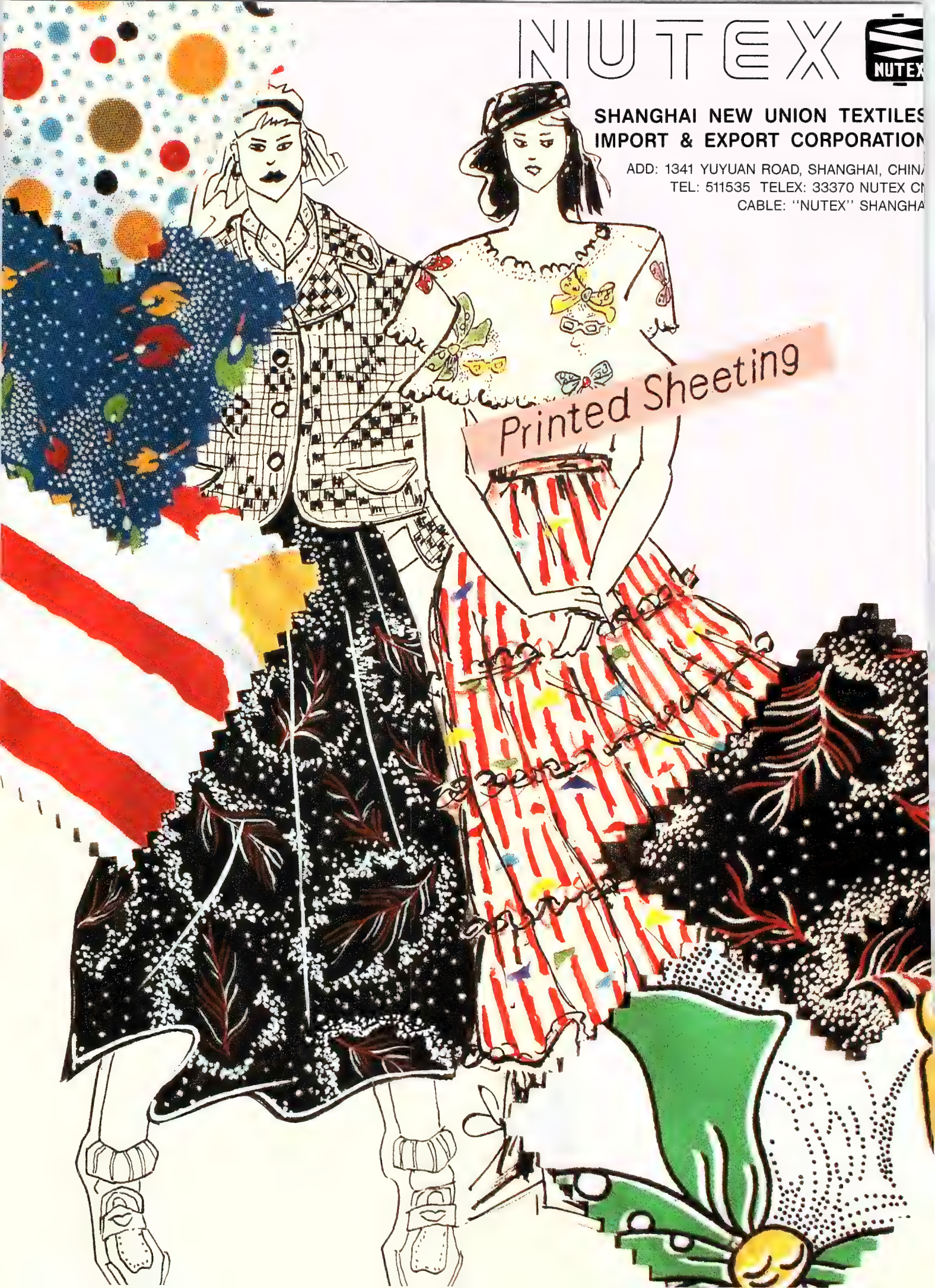
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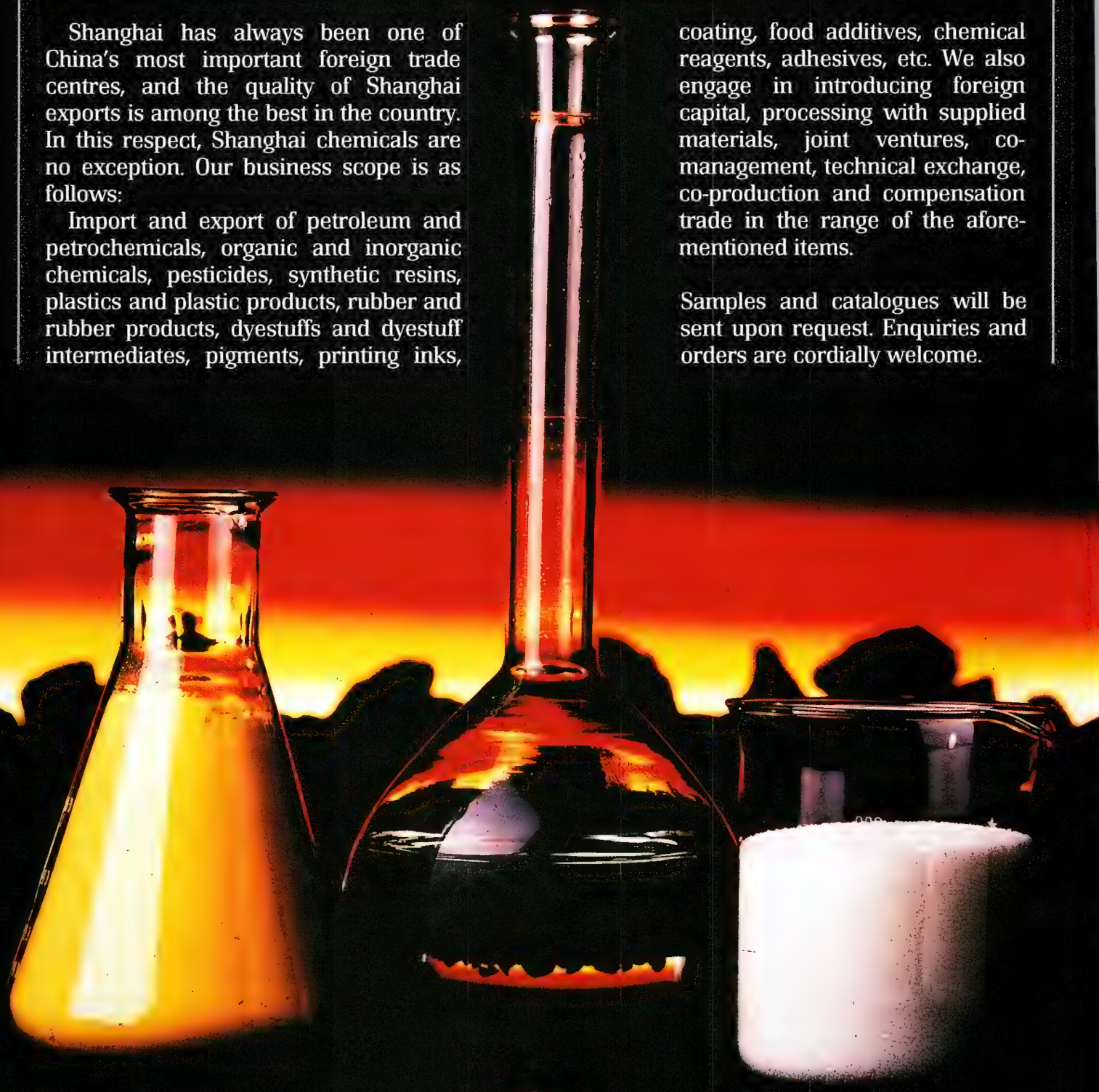
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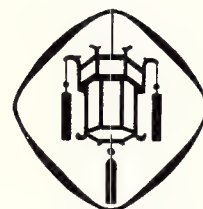
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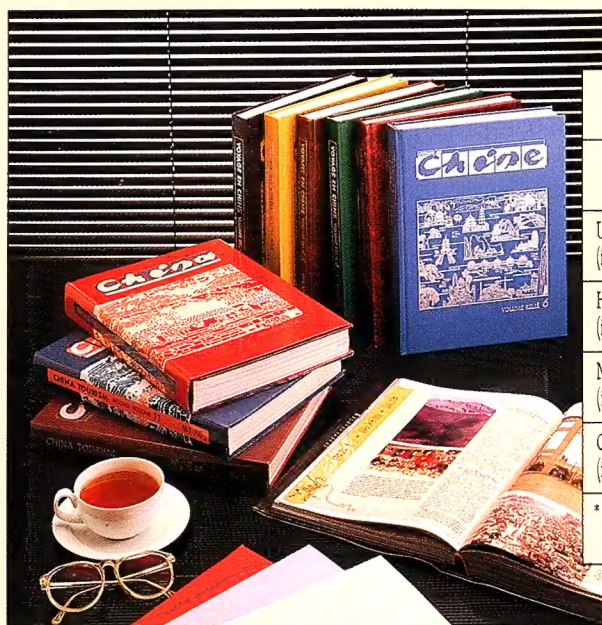
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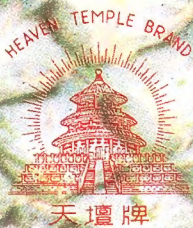
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